Contributions by Horatio Bottomley, Maud Churton Braby, Nellie Tayl
"Taffrail," C. Randolph Lichfield, John S. Margerison,

The March

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"THESE KEEP ME SMILING"

BEECHAM'S PILLS

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Photo Malcolm Arbuthnot

Even girls brought up in idleness and luxury are buckling to in war-time, and on page 415 Miss Nellie Taylor, the charming young actress, proves the truth of this assertion in a delightful article illustrated from a series of bewitching pictures of herself.

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Photo *Malcolm Arbuthnot.*

Girls who in peace-time were content to be merely decorative, are now scrubbing wards and waiting at buffets, and what is more, says Miss Nellie Taylor, doing it without the least bit of fuss.

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Early rising is quite a new experience for many maidens, but alarum clocks are merciless, and V.A.D. nurses and girls on morning shifts at canteens cannot linger in bed as in the old, leisurely days.

By Nellie Taylor.

Many girls are now doing both for themselves and others, things which before the war they rarely attempted. In the following article Miss Nellie Taylor, who plays so delightfully in *High Jinks* at the Adelphi Theatre, describes how many erstwhile butterfly girls have now become the busiest of busy bees, and illustrates their activities with charming photographs of herself.—[Ed. R. M.]

"Wash up? Make my hands all rough and horrid by putting them in nasty, greasy water and dabbling about with dirty plates? Oh, I *couldn't!*"

It was so easy to talk like that two-and-a-half years ago. Most of us did it—about washing up, and other things, too. "Oh, I couldn't. My dear, I've never made a bed in my life—I shouldn't know how to start!" Did we think it just a little *infra dig.*, or was it only sheer laziness on our part?

Whatever the reason may have been, facts remain unaltered and unalterable. Before the war a great many girls were inclined to be silly little snobs. They "couldn't do!" heaps of ordinary, everyday things, though their parents were by no means millionaires, simply because they thought it was beneath their dignity to condescend so far.

It strikes me quite forcibly that the war has turned women inside out in many ways. And not only in the big ways we hear about and read about, but in heaps of small things that nobody talks of, though they have meant a positive revolution in the lives of many girls.

Go to any hospital and you will see a quietly efficient girl scrubbing a ward. "Who is that?" you whisper, and learn that she is the daughter of an earl. Behind canteen

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counters or in hut kitchens adies who never did more than give orders to their cooks stand for hours serving soldiers and sailors or cooking poached eggs and sausages by the hundred! Wonderful, isn't it? And the most remarkable point about the whole thing is the fact that no fuss is made—these things are done merely as a matter of course as part of one's "job!"

Incidentally, and before going any further, let me put on record the cheering fact that we have learnt to value time! Women have always been notorious sinners in their slackness over time. But we know better to-day. There is so much to be done—every minute is precious. Whether our work is paid or voluntary, it *is* work, and time is made for workers to stick to.

As an instance, let me quote a girl I knew before the war—a young married woman who did nothing except run her moderate-sized house. Every morning she spent at least two hours shopping, quite needlessly. At the various shops she met many friends and gossiped with them interminably, thus wasting their time and her own.

And now? She is a voluntary worker at a big War Hospital Supply Depôt, and goes on duty every morning at ten o'clock sharp. Before leaving home she gives her household orders by telephone when trade is slack and the lines are not busy, or else sends post-cards overnight.

"I sometimes wonder how I ever spent a whole morning ordering dinner!" she said when I met her the other day hurrying off to her work.

So many of us took a pride in declaring we simply *couldn't* get up in the morning without a cup of tea placed at our bedside by a thoughtful maid, and never earlier

Miss Taylor points out that many young married women who used to idle away the whole morning now make the beds——

Photos Malcolm Arbuthnot.

——and give the household orders by telephone before going on duty by 10 o'clock at some War Hospital Supply Depôt or other institution.

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Washing up is a job that was generally cold-shouldered, but there is no lack of offers when it comes to washing up at a canteen or buffet, declares Miss Taylor——

Photos Malcolm Arbuthnot.

——while even dusting has its devotees now that servants are so conspicuous by their absence.

than 8 or 8.30—in fact, 9 o'clock was the hour we preferred! Many houses can record a huge transformation in this respect. Gone is the early-morning tea (insidious delight!), gone are the protracted hours of bathing and dressing at leisure, leaving one's room to be done at an impossible hour by a tired maid. Behold, instead, inexorable alarum clocks by many bedsides, timed to go off at 6 a.m., and never failing in that duty!

There are many girls who belong to the morning shift at canteens, or V.A.D. nurses who must be on duty early in the morning. No gradual waking for them. A sharp ting-ting-ting, a rapid bath and toilette, and a hurried breakfast. I know of one, once a luxury-loving girl, who boils her own kettle on an oil-stove while she dresses, then makes tea—which, helped with a slice of bread and butter, she calls breakfast—and afterwards dashes out to work.

This same servant problem has brought about other changes, and advantageous ones, too, in many cases. If servants cannot be obtained, the inevitable and ruinously expensive charlady is our only hope, but to trust our precious china and other ornaments to her ruthless onslaughts

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Photo *Malcolm Arbuthnot.*

The sheltered damsel who before the war could not go on a journey without someone to get her ticket and see to her luggage, has now acquired a new independence and manages these things unaided.

is more than we can bear. So we dust them ourselves! Consequently breakages are becoming few and far between.

Some people have curious and incorrect ideas about canteen work. They seem to think it is a joyous round of handing cups of tea and sandwiches across a counter or taking orders for fried eggs and bacon from hungry fighting men! They forget that the tea must be made, the sandwiches cut, the fried eggs and bacon cooked, *and*—the plates, knives, and cups washed up afterwards!

Girls who loathed the very idea of clearing up a meal for themselves now wash up after hundreds of meals daily, besides clearing and cleaning tables and sweeping floors It's jolly good fun, really, and though most people like the "waitress" part of it best, they take their turn at the less pleasant jobs quite cheerfully.

Funnily enough. at dinner recently somebody asked a girl I know if she would join a canteen staff. "Oh, I couldn't!" she exclaimed. "I'm so shy, I should never have the courage to go into a big room and wait on the men. I *know* I should drop my tray and mix up my orders. But I wouldn't mind washing up a bit; that's so easy. I'd wash up for hours if they'd let me!" Let her? That canteen accepted her services with joy, and many other girls get extra time for waiting, owing to the persistence of this unique helper, who clings to the unpleasant task of washing up.

Have you ever tried to cut bread-and-butter for a hundred men? When it comes to turning the figure into thousands, bread-cutting ceases to be an amusement and becomes a profession. At one of the big station canteens, where thousands of men are served daily, a girl has been going about with her right hand in bandages for some time. Under the lint that hand is bruised and raw between the first finger and thumb. It appears that during a sudden rush of leave-trains she cut up loaves for five hours at a stretch, and when she was

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The girl who once would not even light her own cigarette if she could get someone else to do it for her—

forcibly removed from the task her right hand was raw, and turned into one great bruise. "Look at that!" she said to a friend, laughing. "Why, I didn't know how to cut a sandwich before the war!"

And now may I tell you the simple story of Lazy Lucy? Lucy, in 1914, was one of those silly females who could do nothing for herself. At least, she had grown or been encouraged into this belief. "Mother, I want my dress fastened!" or "Where's Alice? There's a button off my glove!" or again "I want a taxi. Where's Bob? Make him get one for me." And so on through every stage of daily existence. I began to wonder when she would exclaim: "I want my dinner cut up. Where's father? Ask him to do it for me!"

When Lazy Lucy went on a railway journey the entire family was pressed into service. Somebody packed her trunk, somebody else fastened her shoes, somebody collected money and put it in her purse, somebody looked out a train, and a whole platoon of relatives and servants bundled her into a cab *en route* for the station! That was three years ago.

To-day a transformation has occurred. Lucy has found her own feet, and is a happier, wiser, nicer girl in consequence. The family is divided; Bob is in France, her mother works regularly at a hospital, her father is busier than ever, and Lucy is driving an ambulance for the Red Cross Society and thoroughly enjoying it too!

Photos *Malcolm Arbuthnot.*

—and whose days were a round of social gaiety, has now put her shoulder to the wheel and is doing splendid work for her country.

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THE TRAP

By C. Randolph Lichfield

"Lo now, what hearts have men! They never mount
As high as woman in her selfless mood."

The thick-set, bull-necked Swiss waiter (Swiss insomuch as kittens born in a baker's oven are logically loaves) stood idly at the swing doors, his crumpled napkin dangling from his fleshy hands folded behind him, looking out through the glass panels at the traffic of the cross-roads.

Nobody could have suspected he was watching for somebody in particular, for his face wore a gloomy look of melancholy abstraction, as if the prospect were utterly devoid of interest for him. He had cultivated that expression, being of the opinion that when one's instructions are to notice everything it is well to appear interested in nothing.

He had seen the person for whom he was watching some seconds before he turned away from the door and began to meander along down the avenue of small tables. As he passed the table at which a young man sat smoking a cigarette and reading a newspaper, he threw his napkin with a slight flourish to his left shoulder after the manner of his kind, though in point of fact in his case it was a signal.

"Waiter—my bill," said the young man, speaking English without the trace of a foreign accent, which may be accounted for by the fact that he was English—even as the waiter was Swiss.

"*Oui, m'sieur,*" returned the waiter.

The use of the phrase was another thing the intelligent man had cultivated, as it served to indicate that he was French-Swiss rather than German-Swiss.

While the young "Englishman" folded up his newspaper and took his hat, the waiter wrote out a check, and as he bent obsequiously and laid it on the table he said under his breath:

"South side, going west."

Apparently the other did not hear. His blunt-featured face remained perfectly impassive. He glanced at the check, paid it with a single coin, took his stick and gloves, and, rising, walked out into the street with a slight swagger.

He turned west, and after going along for a few yards crossed to the south side of the street. He walked briskly, with a rather jaunty air, till presently he overtook the tall, high-shouldered man whom the Swiss waiter had looked for and seen from the café door.

"Afternoon, Mr. Otterer!" he exclaimed lightly, though his eyes scanned the other man's face with an anxious, questioning look. "Glad to see you."

Mr. Charles Otterer, an "Englishman" of some seven years' standing, also with blunt features, whose normal expression was one of obstinate repose, stopped mechanically, and, offering his big hand to be shaken, glanced around him somewhat furtively.

"Think anybody followed you?" he inquired in an undertone.

He spoke English fluently, but in a thick, deep tone which suggested that his vocal chords had been calloused by the German language.

"I'm sure not," replied the young man. "You've guarded against that."

"Perhaps," replied Otterer. "Well, let us walk, then. There can be nothing suspicious in our meeting like this, and the street is the safest place for conversation if we walk briskly. Don't appear interested in what I say; speak casually now and then and laugh, even if you interrupt me. We do not know what 'beasts' may be stalking us, and the matter's serious."

"I concluded it must be from what Carlos said," murmured the other, falling into stride. "Is it about the 'last letters'?"

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"Carlos does not know," said Otterer with sour contempt. "I merely told him to give you the sign when I passed. No, it is about the eighth letter."

"'H'! What is 'H'?"

Otterer's face darkened with a quick scowl and he uttered a slight sound of impatience in his throat.

"Reich, you are stupid," he exclaimed softly. "Are there two eighth letters in the alphabet? Yes, 'H.' The 'beasts' have got Heydebrand. He is to be tried in secret next week, and if nothing can be done to prevent it, will be shot at the Tower. Are you intelligent enough to grasp such an explicit statement as that?"

Reich turned pale, and bit his lip with mortification.

"I am not stupid at all," he protested mildly. "You know I am not or you would not confide in me and employ me."

"It's a bad business," Otterer said in a rumbling voice. "My orders are to prevent it. They are high orders—the highest, for H. has powerful friends at home. I am given to understand that if I do not prevent it, I can hope for no recompense for my past services, but may even find myself disgraced when the good time comes—I, who have done so much and run such risks. There! I mean to prevent it."

"How did the 'beasts' get him?" Reich asked, and, obedient to the other's injunctions, forced a careless laugh.

"The Cawfield business. You have heard of it? Nobody here attached any importance to what C. was doing, but at home it was different. I don't know what their information was, but H. got orders to find out precisely the nature of C.'s invention and report. Let us turn down here. We shall get an idea then if we are being followed."

"No one is following," declared Reich, when, some way down the quiet side street, he stopped and looked round on the pretext of facing the wind to light a cigarette. "And Heydebrand—he was caught, then?"

"Cawfield was too much for him," replied the elder man as they went on. "He has brains, that young fellow—brains and cunning. I don't know very much about it; I have not seen fit to go to the authorities to inquire, you may be sure, but it seems that he let Heydebrand steal some silly plans which he had simply concocted for the purpose, and H. was caught by the 'beasts' with the plans in his pocket."

"A trap?"

"Yes, he fell into it, fool that he must be! And, because he has powerful friends, at all costs he must be dragged out of it! H. has offered the only explanation possible—that the plans are his own and were stolen from him by Cawfield. Only Cawfield can disprove that. And—he must go; he must not give evidence."

"Go?" exclaimed the young man, rather startled. "You mean——"

"Certainly! If I can find him. That is my difficulty—to find him. He took alarm, I suppose, and to complete his invention has gone into hiding somewhere. He moved away from his workshop in the dead of night, Reich, and, to tell you how wary he has suddenly become, he and his wife transferred everything—models, plans, plant, everything—by pantechnicon van very late one night. He drove the van himself, and it must have been his wife who rode on the tail-board.

"That is all I have been able to discover. Next morning—let us turn down here—next morning Mrs. C. was back at the flat where they live, but her husband—no, not to this day; not so much as a letter from him bearing a postmark, and the letters which arrive at the flat are not forwarded. Their baker is one of us, and their maid is the usual chatterbox, but they can't tell what they don't know. And nobody but his wife knows where C. is hiding. I'm convinced of that."

"But doesn't she visit him?"

"I begin to think not—certainly not since I received my instructions. I have had her followed. And if she visited him she would surely take his letters to him."

"Not necessarily—or, indeed, she may Perhaps the maid is lying to the baker."

"Why should she, unless she suspected him? He is very English-looking and trades in the name of Williams. Besides, that is not material. It matters nothing who is lying if I cannot get at the truth. And at once—I must find C. and deal with him at once. It is his life or H's. That's certain. And my future depends on saving H. Besides, there's C.'s invention, which may be vastly more important than the stupid people here imagine. C. is clever. They appreciate that at home, and have evidently heard something that's made them uneasy. And he must be very near to completing whatever it is, to be able to remove all his plant in one van, set it up, and work it single-handed. Any day some powerful new weapon may be turned upon us."

"I trust that you are over-anxious, Mr. Otterer," murmured Reich.

Then laughing his forced laugh again, he threshed the air with his stick for the edification of a man on the opposite side of the street.

"It's altogether a bad situation," muttered

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Otterer. "But there's one ray of hope, and a bright one. Now listen well. Then we must part. We'll turn up here. You must write an anonymous letter to Mrs. C., and have it slipped into her letter-box about seven o'clock this evening. It's all you've got to do. You write a neat, feminine hand, and it's the sort of thing women do and men don't."

He removed a piece of banana-skin from his path with his stick, and laughed rather sardonically as they passed a couple of women who stood talking.

"I have written it down with the address, but I would like you to carry it in your mind if you can," he said. "I gather that she is somewhat jealous of her handsome husband, you will understand, and I hope she will lead me to his hiding-place."

"I'll do my best," murmured the younger man vaguely. "But if it is long——"

"It is not long—word for word, mind: 'Is it advisable that a woman whose antecedents are at least questionable should have access to your husband at most hours when you have not? She may be merely beautiful, but she may also be dangerous.' If you don't think you can remember it exactly you'd better have it in writing, but destroy the copy when you've done with it."

"Better let me have the copy," said Reich dubiously. "I can destroy it, and I might forget the words."

Otterer took out a cigarette-case and opening it, offered it with a smile. It contained five cigarettes on one side, and on the other a tube of paper which looked much like a cigarette.

"Take it, then," he said. "An unnecessary stratagem, as it happens, but I did not know in what circumstances I might have to pass it on to you, with only a word or two of explanation, perhaps."

Reich took the little tube and set it between his lips.

"I hope it will *draw* well," he said meaningly.

"I think it will," Otterer returned darkly, his face bent in a scowl to the pavement. "I *must* get him. He *must* be quieted."

"A nice word, 'quieted'," observed the young man with a slight shudder, and folded the paper tube away into a pocket-book. "I suppose I shall read how a certain young inventor of great promise blew himself to atoms making some dangerous experiments or shot himself in despair at the failure of his plans?"

"I do not speak of that," said Otterer gruffly, and, stopping short at a street corner, offered his hand. "See, you turn down here; I'll go straight on. Carlos or Paul will let you know if I want you."

"Very good. I will smoke the cigarette at home immediately."

"I don't wish it delivered much before seven."

"Very good, then," Reich answered. "Rely on my discretion. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

II.

The maid saw the letter lying on the mat and carried it to her mistress, who was enjoying a quiet hour with a book in the little drawing-room.

"Who brought it, Clara?" Anita asked as she accepted it and saw it was not stamped.

"I don't know, ma'am. I just found it."

Anita borrowed a pin from her hair and opened the envelope idly. As she drew out the note she noticed that it was strongly scented, and guessed at once that her unknown correspondent was a woman. Her fine, dark eyes hardened as she saw the note was without any form of address, conclusion, or heading; and with a start she sat up and read:

"Is it advisable that a woman whose antecedents are at least questionable should have access to your husband at most hours when you have not?

She may be merely beautiful, but she may also be dangerous."

While her eyes dwelt upon it she rose slowly to her feet, reaching out a hand to the mantelshelf.

Her lips shaped the words mutteringly as she read them a second time; then she glanced at the writing on the envelope incredulously.

"Does it—mean that Dick is being visited by some woman?" she demanded in a breathless voice, and, raising her head, looked round the room questioningly. "It isn't possible! Surely it isn't possible? Who could it be—and who could have written this?"

She held the note in the direct light of an electric-bulb behind her shoulder and read it for the third time, her hand shaking slightly and her lips trembling.

"There must be something in it," she muttered. "Nobody who knows us intimately enough to write such a letter as a joke would do anything so vulgar. And it would be phrased differently—more definitely, I think. 'She may be merely beautiful, but she may also be dangerous.' Whoever wrote that doesn't know me—wasn't sure whether I could more easily be made jealous or alarmed about Dick, so she tried both. I can't think why—unless she has a grudge against the woman and hopes I will go along and find her with Dick. But that's assuming it's true!

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"Supposing it *is* true—that some beautiful woman has been set to spy on Dick at his work!—would he be so foolish, after what's happened and all the precautions he's taken? That would be 'dangerous.' Then, supposing it's *not* true? There must—must be something in it. I'm certain it's not a joke. It looks to me as if it had been sprinkled with scent after it was written."

Turning, she held it between her eyes and the light, so that certain spots in the paper where the writing was slightly blurred showed rather lighter and less opaque than the surrounding paper.

"Yes," she decided, "roughly sprinkled with scent after it was written. What could be the object of scenting an anonymous letter intended to anger or alarm me?"

Dropping back into her chair she sat awhile, her pale, tense face between her hands, and gazed about her with gloomy excitement. All at once she started up, and, touching the bell as she turned to the door, left the room.

She still scanned the letter while waiting in the hall for the servant to appear.

"Clara," she said, "I don't think they will, but if Mr. and Mrs. Madden should come, tell them I have been obliged to go out unexpectedly."

"Yes, ma'am," answered the maid, regarding her with slightly-veiled curiosity. "I hope nothing's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Anita, passing quickly into her bedroom.

She was some time dressing, for every now and then her thoughts threw over her a spell, which she broke from only with an effort, uttering a sharp exclamation of anger or a scornful little laugh. When she was quite ready she opened a small drawer of the dressing-table and took out a neatly-fashioned revolver, and, after considering it a moment, she put it into her bag with her purse and handkerchief.

"He laughed at my getting it," she muttered, wheeling away to the door, "but perhaps he'll have to admit a woman may have use for such a thing."

As she left the flat and went down the winding stairs, Charles Otterer issued from the deep gloom at the far end of the passage-like landing and cautiously followed the light clip-clop of her heels, his rubber-soled shoes making no sound. On the bottom flight he paused to give her a longer start before following her into the street.

The night was dark and misty, but as there were few people about in the side streets he preferred to let her out of sight and to follow the sound of her heels rather than risk her glancing back and seeing him. When she turned into the busier and noisier main street, however, he deemed it advisable to follow her more closely, lest she should suddenly hail a cab or board an omnibus.

He was no novice at "shadowing," and, notwithstanding the fact that he was a big man, with his quiet dress and unhurried manner, he was not such a conspicuous figure as to attract her attention if she chanced to glance back. On the other hand, she was wearing a toque trimmed with a broad band of white fur, which facilitated his keeping her in sight even when the moving throngs encompassed her and the shaded lights were dimmest.

She walked quickly and directly, as with a set purpose and some excitement. She led him fully half-a-mile along the main street, never loitering or looking back, then turned abruptly into a street of moderate-sized houses.

Otterer went on to the farther side before he turned after her, thus conceding a few yards; she was no more than a vague figure in the gloom when she mounted some steps and knocked peremptorily at a door. Without altering his pace he walked past the house and turned round the first corner on his left, and there he stopped to watch and consider.

He was a little disconcerted. The house was apparently furnished and occupied. It seemed an unlikely place for Cawfield to have elected to hide in to perfect his invention in secrecy.

"Surely he sleeps where he works," muttered Otterer in a tone of annoyance. "He wouldn't leave his plant unguarded and yet lodge away from home. But if he's not there, what's she after? She's had the note or I never saw a woman in a passionate hurry yet. A thousand curses if I'm to be baffled again. Possibly her suspicions have pitched upon some woman who lives there, and when she finds she was mistaken she will go along to see Cawfield and find out who is the woman."

Argue as he might, however, he became more and more exasperated as minute after minute went by and Mrs. Cawfield did not reappear.

He disliked the whole business intensely, not because he was squeamish, but because time was a big factor against him, and failure would entail very serious consequences to him. He had reason to apprehend that "the beasts"—otherwise the English Secret Service—had a black mark against his name in their records, and if he should make a mistake in this affair and leave a trace of his identity he would almost certainly have to face a firing-party at the Tower.

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But his orders were peremptory—to use "every means in his power" to prevent Cawfield giving evidence against Heydebrand and to secure plans of the mysterious invention. And he meant to use the extremest means in his power, not only because there was not time to experiment with less violent methods, but also because violent means appealed to him more strongly by reason of the fact that, although he was a naturalised "Englishman," he had been born in Germany, and silk purses are not made out of sow's ears.

In his impatience and uncertainty the period of waiting probably seemed much longer than it actually was before he saw the door of the house he was watching open, and a figure like Mrs. Cawfield's appear on the steps in the dim glow from the shaded hall-light.

He watched her intently as she descended the steps slowly, as if detained by the conversation of somebody in the screening doorway. He did not feel certain of her, and angry alarm mounted in him as the idea entered his mind that it might be Mrs. Cawfield's custom before visiting her husband to call at this house and dress somebody in her rather conspicuous clothes, to lure away possible spies while she herself slipped off unseen. But as she wheeled away from the house and turned up the street at a brisk pace he decided she was indeed Mrs. Cawfield, and he started after her.

"I expect she went to discuss the note with a friend," he muttered. "Now, will she return home or will she lead me to Cawfield?"

For some little distance it seemed as if she were going home. Then all at once she stopped and turned aside, as if attracted by some article in the window of a pawnbroker's shop, where a boy was putting up the shutters, and Otterer saw her glance back. Apparently she did not see him, for the next moment she turned quickly round the shop and disappeared.

Now she was not going homeward!

Otterer followed her at a safe distance down a long street which began with a few shops, continued in houses of rather pretentious architecture and ended in mean cottages. He followed her down a dark street where dark stables squeezed dark cottages and the air was heavy with the smell of garbage, and thence for a considerable distance along another main street. Then she turned off in the direction in which the river lay.

"My word!" exclaimed Otterer softly, "it looks as if she's making for Cawfield's old workshop. It would have been a slim trick if he'd hired a van that night and moved out, only to make a circuit and move in again. I never thought of that. It would account for his having been able to remove all the plant he required in a single van. He may not have moved a tool, indeed. I ought to have thought of it."

Otterer was now following her through a labyrinth of dark, deserted byways formed by numerous small timber-yards, coal-wharves, and stores, stables and workshops, and at every turn it became more evident that she was making for the one-time stables which Cawfield had rented as a workshop.

Seeking every shadow, Otterer followed her with increasing caution till he found an opening in a broken hoarding where he could hide while watching her. He saw her stop and look up at the dark building, examining the windows, then move to the big double doors. She paused there as if she were fitting a key into the lock or listening for sounds within, and Otterer waited with bated breath for her next move.

"Perhaps," he mused, "she'll go away again if she hears no sound, for with not a gleam of light from any window or the skylights, it may occur to her he meets the lady elsewhere, though, of course, he has shut in any beam which would betray his presence to any of us who chanced along. No, she's going in."

A small disc of light from a pocket-lamp struck the postern-door, travelling over it searchingly for a moment, and silhouetting Mrs. Cawfield's figure. It still shone as she opened the door cautiously and stepped in, and it slowly narrowed as she quietly closed the door behind her. Then everything was dark again.

Otterer's hand, which had involuntarily closed in a tight grip on the revolver in his coat pocket, relaxed as he emitted a sigh.

"I could wish she hadn't," he muttered. "She has served my purpose, and I could wish to let her go. Perhaps it may be possible. But I dare not give them time to come to the conclusion the note was only a ruse, and to escape by the yard at the back. I'll give her ten minutes, as near as I can judge it; then, if she has not gone, I am not to blame. The note alone will be enough to suggest that jealousy, occasioned by an anonymous letter, was the cause of the double tragedy."

With hunched shoulders he leant against a post of the hoarding and watched the building, his every sense strained by anxiety to catch the slightest sight or sound. Once he thought he heard a report like a pistol's or a door banged, and it made him wonder excitedly what was happening.

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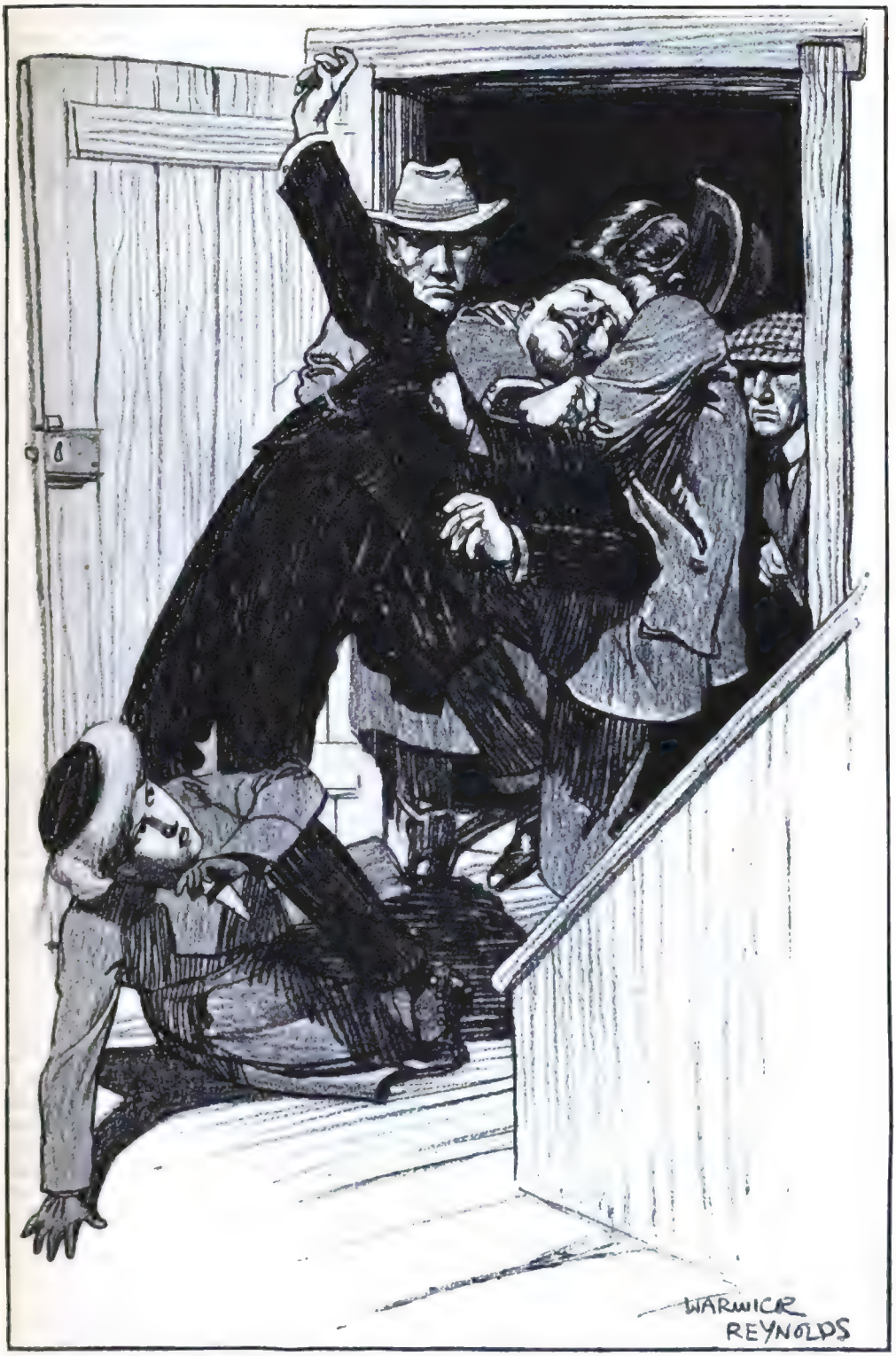

A pair of strong arms were thrown round Otterer's neck from behind, and a big knee was bent into the small of his back. "It's Otterer! Charles Otterer!" roared a deep voice triumphantly. [Page 427, col. 2.]

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"I'm a fool to wait," he whispered sullenly. "I must not fail. For one to fail is enough. It would not be nice to stand at Heydebrand's side one morning and be shot with him, both having failed."

He had almost resolved to delay no longer when he heard sounds as of two men passing down the near alley, and he was constrained to wait till they were out of hearing.

Not another sound reached him, except the constant rumble of the great city's ceaseless activity and the creaking of the river's tide, both of which seemed but the darkness made audible. Mrs. Cawfield had not reappeared when he stepped from the gap in the hoarding and stole across the roadway to the stable door.

The postern-door was shut, but it was not secured against him, as he thought it might be. He opened it with great caution, and stepped into the more utter darkness beyond. He closed the door again without a sound, and, searching around and above for even a pinpoint of light which might guide him, groped gently in widening circles with his hands to find the nearest wall and get his bearings.

Inch by inch he moved forward and aside till his finger-tips touched rough wood. It proved to be the wall of a staircase leading to the floor above. With his hands he traced the first few stairs to ascertain their height and width as a precaution against stumbling noisily.

Stealthily, leaning his weight very carefully and feeling his way with his hands, he began to ascend.

The fourth stair creaked a little, but not alarmingly, and the next step brought his eyes on a level with the landing, where he saw a thread-like light showing, apparently under a door. The glow of it was so faint as scarcely to relieve the darkness, but it served as a guide; and bating his breath to catch the least sound in the silence which perplexed him, he gained the landing and approached the door.

No crack or crevice afforded him a view through the door, which was held closed by a thumb-latch, and but for the dim glow on the toes of his boots he might have imagined himself alone in the building, though he fancied he could hear some very slight sounds, scarcely louder than those of someone breathing or moving very quietly.

He stood for a moment, mouthing in an effort to choke down a sudden horror of the act he intended, and to compose himself by reflecting that his plan could not fail; then, grasping the revolver in his pocket firmly in his right hand, he raised the latch with barely a sound, and pushed the door open a couple of inches.

Its opening showed him only a stretch of whitewashed walls, and pushing it a little wider he bent his head to peep round the jamb. As he did so a sound as soft as a cat's movement startled him, and while some blunt instrument was thrust into his side with painful force a voice cried breathlessly:

"*Spy!* Don't move! Throw up your hands or I'll shoot you!"

His sudden start threw the door wide, and, plunging forward, he was dazzled by an electric torch in front of him. He wheeled round to see Mrs. Cawfield in the bright streaming light, and he jerked back his head from the revolver she pushed into his face. He had snatched his hand from his pocket empty, and involuntarily he put up both his empty hands as he recoiled from her.

Very pale, her hand unsteady, but her wild eyes gazing into his with fearless intensity, she followed him till a wall brought him to an abrupt stop. Then she drew out of his reach, still covering him with her revolver. And thus they contemplated each other through a dramatic, breathless pause.

But out of the tail of his eye Otterer had seen that the electric torch was not held by anybody, but had been set up on a box upon a bench to shine towards the door and dazzle him while Mrs. Cawfield startled him from her hiding-place on the landing. Single-handed she had surely trapped him, but did she think that single-handed she could capture him?

"Madam," he expostulated, "for heaven's sake put down your weapon! What do you take me for? I am no thief, no spy. I came to see a Mr. Cawfield on business, and must have blundered into the wrong premises."

Anita lowered her hand slightly and braced herself.

"Don't say 'blundered,'" she returned, her tone harsh from excitement; "it is such a poor compliment to me. Don't lower your hands—and don't move! The wrong premises, certainly, for Mr. Cawfield has not been here or near here for some days, but you did not 'blunder' here. Where you blundered, Mr. Spy, was in scenting that note after you'd written it. That was so obviously done to create the impression in my mind that it was written by a woman that I naturally decided it was written by a man, and from that——"

"Madam," protested Otterer in a weak voice, and lowered his hands in a little appealing gesture to test her vigilance, "you evidently——"

"Put up your hands!" cried Anita sharply, and stamped her foot. "You are not a target I am likely to miss if I fire, and if there's one thing I could kill without compunction it is a German spy!"

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"But, madam, I am not a spy!" declared Otterer, raising his hands again. "I am not German; I am an English business-man come to see Mr. Cawfield with reference to an urgent letter received from him too late to-day for me to call earlier. Let me show you the letter; I have it——"

"Keep your hands up!"

Otterer was alarmed by her tone, and checked his hand on its way to the revolver in his pocket. He regarded her distressfully for a second, and shook his head.

"It is a painful mistake—dreadful!" he declared. "If you would only let me show you the letter you'd see at once——"

"No! Keep your hands up!"

"Come and take it yourself, madam—feel in my pockets."

"You can show it to me presently," Anita answered determinedly. "A friend is following me here as soon as he can get the necessary police to effect your capture. Then you can show it to me. I'm curious to know if it is scented!"

Otterer could no longer dissemble. Sudden passion shook him, and forced a hoarse cry from his throat. He made a short movement to rush at her, daring what she would do, but the glinting weapon she raised to his face cowed him again.

"So!" he grunted savagely, murdering her with his eyes, and thinking furiously. "So!"

He leant back against the wall, and glowered at her, his great chest heaving, his hands on a level with his shoulders.

"You won't scare me like that," declared Anita a little breathlessly, as if the strain of the situation were beginning to tell on her. "I've got you, and I mean to keep you till my friend comes. He can't be long now."

"I expect that's his step on the stairs," said Otterer as quick as thought, and as she turned her head to listen he rushed at her.

She fired as he bore her down, but she missed him. She fired again, perhaps involuntarily, as her head struck the floor, but the bullet tore harmlessly through the skirt of his coat. Then he snatched the weapon from her hand, and in his passionate excitement flung it away. Had he kept it he might have killed her, and sold his life dearly to the men who were closing around the building from every side. But as he stood astride her, holding her down with one hand, he lost vital moments by trying to extricate his revolver from his pocket with the other hand. The weapon had become fixed in the lining of the pocket, and though he tugged and tore it baffled him.

Screaming shrilly scream after scream, Anita clung to his left arm, foiling his every attempt to employ both hands in his efforts. She clung to his arm with a desperate grasp, now almost pulling him off his feet, then almost raising herself to her own. And all the time he could have shot her through his pocket, but was too distracted to think of it. Every breath he drew he spent in a curse upon her, and her voice rang out in screams.

And while they struggled, screamed, and swore a pair of strong arms were thrown round Otterer's neck from behind, and a big knee was bent into the small of his back.

"It's Otterer! Charles Otterer!" roared a deep voice triumphantly. "We've caught him tripping now! Get her up, White! See what he's got in his pocket, Petley—right hand—and get the bracelets on him!"

Assisted on either side, Anita scrambled to her feet, shaking the tangled hair out of her face.

"Thank you," she panted. "He hasn't hurt me much. And that makes Number Two I've helped capture!"

"SEND US THE 'ROYAL'!"

"I need not tell you how fond of the ROYAL we are out here, and we certainly do revel in your theatrical features."

This is only one of the many appreciative comments of the fighting men who look to the ROYAL to cheer up their dull moments, and to you to see that they get it.

Your part is so simple. Just hand as many copies of the ROYAL as you can collect over the counter at any post-office, without wrapping of any kind, and they will be distributed among the troops to the very best advantage.

Remember Sir Douglas Haig himself wrote to urge all those at home who have been accustomed to buy books and magazines in the past to continue to do so freely, if possible in increasing numbers, and having read and enjoyed them to pass them on as freely for circulation among the troops.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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THE JOTTINGS OF A SUBALTERN.

IV.—BABY.

This month the Subaltern unfolds the glad story of a dance and a frivolous sweepstake, in which silk stockings and shapely ankles play an important part.

Tommy Binks is my greatest pal in the regiment. To be my pal and in the regiment, or either, not to say both, a chap must be a sport, it goes without saying, for I am Cosmo Vernon Lacy, a not so dusty second-loot in that crackest of crack cavalry the 31st Pinkshires, the dear old die-hard Poppyshirts.

Barging round from station to station as we do one meets some quaint old birds among the local nuts. One of the weirdest I ever struck was at Avonbridge, where I ran across Sir Cheviot Saxeby, D.L., etc., and so forth.

Now, Sir Cheviot dates back to the remotest antiquity. Heaven knows where the first of his ancestors came from, but it is certain that a Saxeby was one of the human Tanks who dressed up like super-Dreadnoughts and fought at Crecy. The main claim Sir Cheviot had to fame, however, was the fact that he possessed two daughters exceedingly goodly to look upon. Tommy and I apportioned them to ourselves directly we saw them at a posh tea given in our honour—the regiment's honour, that is—at Saxeby Chase.

Of course, Tommy, who is a bit young, immediately fell in love with Marcia, the elder. I kept calm, for my choice fell upon Baby, the younger of the Saxeby females. Marcia was twenty-one, tall and inclined to be stately, though I, being experienced, caught a certain glint in her eye that made me wonder whether the sitting-out places where she may have sat out could not tell

Baby was eighteen, with golden-brown hair, and golden-brown eyes full of the purest devil.

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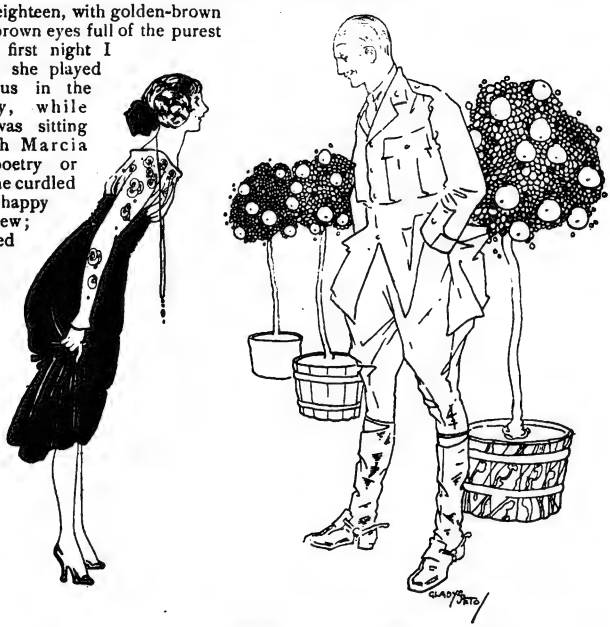
a tale. Baby was eighteen, with golden-brown hair, and golden-brown eyes full of the purest devil. The very first night I dined with them she played leap-frog with us in the picture-gallery, while Tommy Binks was sitting somewhere with Marcia churning out poetry or something from the curdled recesses of his unhappy soul. Marcia knew; the lovesick amused her. She let him carry on, but I almost felt for Tommy. It took him very hard.

That night at three a.m. he staggered into my room at the hotel where we were billeted, his hair damp with perspiration, lit the gas, and sat down on my bed and opened his heart. It must have been the size of a suit-case, for what it contained took him about an hour to describe, and I only heard half of it, too, because I slept during intervals. One has to keep fit at all costs.



I told Baby about the sweepstake in the orangery at Saxeby Chase. She glanced down, raised her skirt—oh, not such a great deal, of course!—and asked innocently: "Do you think I have a sporting chance, my dear Mr. Lacy?"

The upshot was that I, knowing my Marcia, or his, or whosever she was, told him to propose, which he did, and Marcia dispatched him neatly in the afore-mentioned picture-gallery, between a Turner sunset and a Sir Peter Lely of Gilbert Saxeby, who did some fancy stabbing under Prince Rupert in 1642 or thereabouts.

Upon being turned down, seventeen pukka devils entered into Tommy Binks, who had no room for any more, and he looked about him for wild acts and fearsome goings on.

Knowing the opportunities such an affair offers, I suggested that the subs of the regiment should get permission to give a dance in return for the hospitality offered by the local worthies, which permission we got after a certain amount of trouble. And to make things more exciting I organised among the eight subs a sweepstake of a pair of silk stockings each, with four added to make up the dozen, for the girl with the nicest ankles, the decision to be by vote.

Of course, we couldn't very well announce this little sideline openly, but we let it leak out here and there. Personally, I told Baby in the orangery at Saxeby Chase. She glanced down, raised her skirt—oh, not such a great deal, of course!—and asked innocently:

"Do you think I have a sporting chance, my dear Mr. Lacy?"

After which I had a side bet with Tommy Binks, who, in spite of what she had done to him, was offering four to one on Marcia, whose props were certainly above the average, and six to one against the field bar one; rather rash of him, considering he didn't know half the girls who were coming.

You've no idea how a little secret like ours will get round. Every female under ninety within reach did any dirty trick to get asked to our dance. In the end no beauty chorus could have lived for five seconds in the same street with our guests. They were "some" crowd, I can tell you.

I was one of the deputation sent up to Fitzgibbons' in Bond Street to purchase

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the stockings. I am told you can tell a Fitzgibbons' silk stocking even in the dark. They stand alone; it's something in the weft or the warp, or what they give the silkworms for lunch.

Anyhow, Tommy Binks and I went there, and had the most interesting, if bashful, half-hour among all sorts of filmy things, carefully looked after and advised by a peach-blossom damsel who talked about silk stockings as if they were the only things she loved, which was ridiculous, seeing her face and form.

However, we got the hosiery, which worked out at an average of thirty shillings a pair—rather an eye-opener for Avonbridge, by the way—refreshed ourselves with an adequate luncheon and tottered back to the Pinkshires, weary yet successful.

Tommy Binks and I went to purchase the stockings, and had the most interesting half-hour among all sorts of filmy things, carefully advised by a peach-blossom damsel who talked about silk stockings as if they were the only things she loved.

I shall never forget all the worries and the anxieties of that dance. From the outset we seemed doomed to disappointment. We had the girls and we had the legwear, but trouble seemed to haunt us. Somehow or other a kind of rumour floated round that this dance was not as others—that some dark secret lay behind it. I caught the Vicar one morning having a long conversation with the Colonel. Fortunately, he struck our worthy chief on a livery day, and retired hastily wearing the air of an early martyr.

Then the local paper got going. It had a column called "A Little Bird Tells Me——," and then a lot of footling paragraphs, all beginning with "That ——." Fortunately, a man in my troop who used to be a printer got friendly with the local compositor, and discovered, over glasses of beer, the fluid that printers drink occasionally, that a very spicy paragraph was prepared for this column alluding to our little festival.

I immediately rushed round to the reporter-editor-everything-else with a view to making him remove the allusion. Catching him at a convenient moment, I took him out to lunch at a local inn, and by the time we had finished he was feeding out of my hand. He said I was a dev'lish good feller, insisted on taking me into his printery, gave me a pair of tongs, or whatever they are, and made me smash up the type of the paragraph myself.

So far so good.

Well, the great night came at last. I glanced around in proud humility. You would not have met a bonnier bunch of girls anywhere in this world. Their limbs did them credit. For instance, a cousin of young Royston's, Dorothy Something, who is on the stage, wore black silk stockings with little railway engines in gold embroidery running on gold rails. Virginia, the Vicar's daughter, wore rose silk ones with "Time Flies" embroidered in violet round the ankles, a pretty thought which touched my heart. I know her mother beat

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her for it when she found it out, but what are many stripes compared with social triumph?

What I couldn't understand was Baby. She wore a darling little gown of saxe-blue, and her hose were a blue and white chess-board. Still, there was nothing remarkable in that. And the skirt of the gown ran rather longer than Baby's usual run of skirts. It made a calm judgment for the allotment of the prize rather difficult. You can't judge what you can't see, can you?

The way we settled the judging was this. We enticed one girl at a time into a sitting-out place, specially reserved, gathered round her, and bet her she couldn't step over a coffee-stool provided for the purpose. Her attempt to win the bet gave us an opportunity to decide her chances in the event of the evening.

After an exciting succession of lovely angels had stepped daintily over the fortunate coffee-stool, and we were at our wits' end to settle whose ankles took the biscuit, I ran Baby to earth and led her into the appointed place, where the others were assembled as if by chance.

"Baby darling," I cooed, "I'll bet you two ices you don't step over that coffee-stool."

Baby glanced at me contemptuously.

"Thank heaven I've no reason to be ashamed of my ankles," she said piously. "I don't need the excuse you provide so kindly, thank you, dear Cosmo. I want the stockings fairly, and I want to knock out the other girls extremely. Now, gentlemen, here's your opportunity! Don't be shy; I give you permission to look."

She stood in the middle of the room, and for the second time in our acquaintance raised her skirts—well enough for the purpose, anyhow.

The great night came at last. You would not have met a bonnier bunch of girls anywhere in this world.

Hardened soldiers as we were, gasps of admiration rent the air.

Baby was wearing the most delicious little silk socks . . .

As senior subaltern a pleasant duty fell to me. I took a charmingly designed casket from its hiding-place and handed it to her.

"A tribute from Art to Nature," I murmured. "The nicest stockings for the nicest——"

"Hush!" reproved Baby, dropping her skirt and making one dive for the stockings.

(Another of Cosmo's joyous jottings appears next month.)

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Should Women Be Conscripted?

By
HORATIO BOTTOMLEY.

"Every woman who can replace a man, no matter where or how, is aiming a blow at the heart of Germany as surely as though she fired a shot at the head of a Hun," says Mr. Horatio Bottomley, who in the following forcible article advocates the industrial conscription of women—and indeed of the whole nation—as the best and speediest means of winning through to victory.

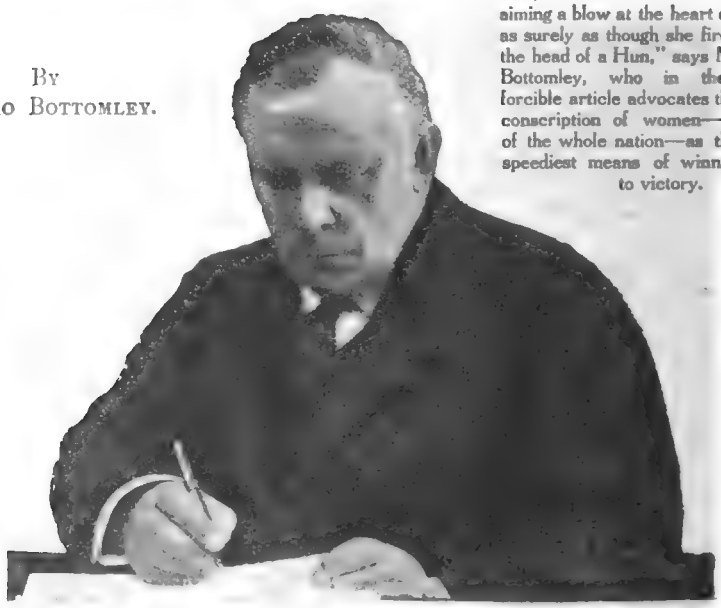

Photo Dobson, Liverpool.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the author of the following striking article.

WE have conscripted all "fit" men up to the age of 41 (and it may soon be 43 or 45) for military service; and we have called upon all other men—"fit" or "unfit," and of all ages—to "enrol" themselves for material service; that is, work of material importance. And should this system of enrolment prove insufficient, then we are to have conscription here as well. At the time of writing, however, nothing has been said about either the conscription or compulsory enrolment of women. I do not, of course, mean conscription for military service. We are all agreed that the bloody business of battle is too hideous a thing for the hands of woman.

Women to the Rescue.

That fact, indeed, is the fundamental argument against the plea for "absolute equality of sex." So long as the peace of the world, by an ironical paradox, depends upon the arbitrament of arms, men must hold their lives at the service of the State. But the actual fighting in battle is only one department of war, after all. For ages women have been the "ministering angels" to the wounded, and to-day they are much more even than that. So peacefully indeed have they penetrated the industrial world that Man-Power is gradually becoming synonymous with Woman-Power.

As a witty judge once reminded us, "Man embraces woman," and, in a hundred directions, the extent to which able-bodied men can be spared for the Colours depends upon the readiness of women to come forward and take their places in the industrial field.

The Supreme Compliment.

The vexed problems of "substitution," "dilution," and the like are largely problems of Woman-Power. Magnificently our brave women and girls have already responded to the call of duty, but nothing can be more certain than that they will be called upon for wider services and greater sacrifices before this war is won. In these critical days there is no room for "slackers" of either sex. The courtly old phrase, "*Place aux dames*," has taken on a new meaning; and, although in stress of war we have lost none of the chivalrous regard for ladies of every rank and station, we now pay them the supreme

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compliment of inviting their practical co-operation in this vital business of war.

We do not need official statistics to remind us of the immense part women are taking in winning the war, or, as Sir William Robertson said not long ago, "winning the peace." Yet, unfortunately, there seems to be a screw loose somewhere. It is evident that the official arrangements for the absorption of female labour are by no means abreast of the needs of the hour. To take but one aspect of the matter: thousands of patriotic women, obviously well fitted for industrial employment, have offered their services to the Ministry of Munitions, only to be turned down without any reason, or placed upon a "waiting list"—which by this time must be long enough to reach from Whitehall to St. Paul's.

This in itself would be bad enough, but what are we to think of a Department that, having apparently mislaid its "waiting lists," goes on to appeal in frenzied tones for more women workers, for all the world as though there were no qualified women loitering at its doors in the forlorn hope of belated recognition?

Wastage of Woman-Power.

It would not be difficult to multiply such instances of the wicked wastage of Woman-Power. But I am concerned to find a remedy. Evidently new methods are needed. Organisation must keep pace with the Empire's needs. In some quarters outright Conscription is suggested, and let me say at once that in principle I can see no valid objection to the proposal—*always assuming that the same is applied to men.* War has broken down the old barriers, and we no longer regard women as a race apart—to be fussed over and played with, flattered and cajoled—and at heart despised. That is the Oriental and, I may add, the German fashion. We have outgrown such foibles. Our women are Britons to the backbone, and after the war—but let us deal first with them *during* the war.

In some respects our women may not be full citizens, but they are loyally content that their acknowledgment of duty should precede our fuller recognition of their rights. Indeed, I am convinced that if it were proved necessary or desirable upon patriotic grounds, the women of Great Britain—the wives, the sisters, and the lovers of our gallant fighting men—would welcome Conscription, and submit with true-hearted loyalty and eager gladness to any demands made upon them in the name of our common patriotism.

The women are ready. Has the time come?

The Way to Victory.

The situation is undoubtedly serious—it always has been from the moment the first shot was fired. But time flies, and we *must* have that victory soon. To win the war, and still more to win the peace that alone will justify and recompense our stupendous sacrifices, we must have men and more men, shells and more shells, fighting material of every kind in deadly abundance. This commonplace is the crux of the position. The question of Woman-Power is not merely the question of more female "hands" in the shell factories; it is the question also of more men in the field, of vast and resistless armies, of unfailing reinforcements, of steady and insistent pressure upon a weakening foe—of lighter casualties and speedier triumph.

Every woman who can replace a man, no matter where or how, is aiming a blow at the heart of Germany as surely as though she fired a shot at the head of a Hun. And if the Conscription of women is the readiest way to set men free for the Army, to stop the depressing tale of exemptions, to free the hands of the Tribunals, to augment the output of shells and guns and to fill up the gaps in the fighting line, then Conscription we must have. Every woman to her post, and God speed their sacred tasks! But, as I have said, we must have Industrial Conscription of the men as well.

The Value of Home Service.

Let me not be misunderstood. I very much doubt if a compulsory levy would add so greatly as some suppose to the number of women and girls available for war-service. I know too well what they are already doing, and have signified their willingness to do. I know, too, how many of them are immersed in domestic duties, in caring for the children—the men and women of to-morrow—in planning the comfort of strenuous war-workers, and in "keeping the home fires burning" for those brave lads across the sea. Those thousands of home-keeping women are rendering yeoman service to their King and Country, and I would not have one of them disturbed.

But there are others—the "odd women" as they have been called—those who as yet are outside the ranks of His Majesty's Domestic Forces, and have not so far been gazetted to a commission in the industrial field. To a large extent I am afraid we are wasting these women. Conscription would spell organisation, and sound organisation would claim them all. And what a claim it would give women to full citizenship when the war is over!

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"Material" Going to Waste.

But it would be a giant's task—and, unfortunately, we are short of giants. Perhaps there are alternative methods. These women who have not yet found their niche are keen and willing; their patriotism is sound, their potential energy is prodigious—if you doubt it watch them on Flag Days, or on any other occasion when they are assigned a definite war task! They are splendid "material," as they say at the War Office. They merely need direction.

Many women were keenly disappointed that the National Registration Act was not followed by a definite allocation of war duty, or at least by authoritative suggestion. Along these lines most valuable results might have been obtained. No elaborate machinery would be required. Representative Local Committees, working in close touch with the Tribunals and responsible to a Woman-Power Board associated with the Ministry of Munitions and other central Departments, would quickly absorb the surplus of female labour. But this plan was a little too obvious for our clever Ministers. And so it may come to Conscription after all.

Taking Stock of Our Resources.

But in that case it must be Conscription of a special character. There must first be a Special Female Census of the United Kingdom—of every girl and woman of sixteen and over, up to fifty. And each must be asked to state exactly how she passes the time at present, and in what capacity, if required, she thinks she could best serve the State.

Such information, of course, would be merely for the guidance of the authorities. But, with the result of the Census before it, the Government would have it carefully analysed and then distributed in appropriate sections throughout the various Public Departments, each of whom would be asked to indicate the persons on the list for which it had suitable work available. Of course, all young mothers, women with families to look after, and those indispensable to their homes or businesses, would be eliminated, subject to proper proof of the fact. And, subject to such safeguards, I don't think I see any great objection to the Conscription of our Woman-Power.

And how, without some system of general application, will it be possible for us to supply the new demand caused by the war? Apart from the fact that perhaps a million of our manhood may be taken from us before the ghastly thing is ended, it must be always borne in mind that at least another million, having tasted life in its wild and primitive form, will never be content to return to their old sedentary occupations. Many—aye, too many—will emigrate to the West; others will make for the farms and the countryside, especially as, beyond any doubt, the State will be offering special inducements for the growing of corn and the rearing of cattle. It will follow, therefore, that there will be much less disturbance of the new Industrial Woman Army that is generally anticipated.

New Outlets for Activity.

I venture to predict, for instance, that after the war we shall see very few young men in the drapers' shops or in the post-offices—or even serving in restaurants. All these things are essentially the sphere of women and girls, as, indeed, is every other kind of light and clerical work. The task of men will be a grim one. Twenty thousand millions of wealth will have been dissipated by the war—gone for ever and ever—leaving behind no monument of human enterprise or labour; and it will be mainly the men's job to restore the terrible wastage.

Then there will be the great Food problem. I doubt whether, after the lessons of the past few months, we shall be content to remain dependent upon other nations for our food. At present *we* are the blockaded nation—thanks to the submarine! Well, the bulk of the new farming industry will be work of too heavy a nature for women, but, on the other hand, poultry-rearing and dairy work will be essentially in their line—and every village in the country must be compelled to furnish its quota of women workers for the local poultry and dairy farms. And surely, as I have already suggested, we can dispense with lusty, athletic curates? If the Rector or the Vicar is too tired to read the Lessons, somebody can always be found to do it, whilst visiting the sick is surely woman's work?

Place for the Women!

And who, pray, better than women to look after those broken in the war, to see to their comforts and their wants? I hope we shall have a Women's Committee attached to the Pensions Department, and another one attached to the Ministry for Food. And who knows that ere long we may not have a Woman's House of Parliament—as a new estate of the realm? The theme is far too comprehensive a one to be dealt with as a subsidiary issue, but I believe I shall be able to find, in its adoption, a final solution of the hitherto unsolved problem of what are called Women's Rights—only, in the new order of things, it will be Women's Duties.

Well, then, taking a dispassionate and comprehensive view of the whole situation, I

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arrive at the conclusion that both the Woman and the Man-Power of the nation may have to be conscripted.

No Drones in War Time.

In other words, the State will have to take stock of all its available forces for both offence and defence. I understand that even in normal times all the drones are thrown out of the beehive—wherein we may surely learn a lesson. At least in war-time we must have no drones. I am not sure, even, that we may not yet have to conscript our youths. I am sure the lusty young girls and boys could be better employed during the war than in learning when William the Conqueror came to the throne, or how many wives Henry VIII. had and how he got rid of them.

Has it ever occurred to you to what an alarming extent we are wasting the Youth-Power of the nation? We have got into the habit of fixing an all-round age at which a child (unless having passed certain "Standards") may leave school, and we have made it a crime for the parents to keep it at home on any pretext. Isn't such a system the essence of stupidity? Haven't you seen some boys—especially in the country districts—hale, strong and hearty, capable of doing a good day's harvesting or hoeing or digging, although under fourteen years of age? And some lusty lassies, too, well fitted for dairy or poultry work? And now that we are at war, and the labour market is depleted, isn't it ridiculous that such a source of national strength should be wasted? When the days of peace return, we will talk about the value of "Education," and all the rest of it. To-day there is a very real meaning in the old proverb about teaching the young idea "to shoot;" but we must also teach it to dig and delve, and in a score of ways to help in the production of the nation's food.

In short, everybody except infants and old people must "do their bit." *That* is the only way to crush the Hun. Women are setting a noble example—and, so far as I am concerned, after the war they may have the vote or anything else they like. They can have mine now if they want it; it has ceased to be of any value! But whilst I still possess it, I vote for Calling up—conscripting all the Men, the Women, and the Youths of the Realm.

. ("Does an Heroic Death wipe out Past Misdeeds?" is the subject of a splendid article by Mr. Bottomley which will appear next month.)

IN THE FIRE.

'Mid the glamour of the twilight, when the dusk of evening falls,
And the shadows grow and lengthen on the old oak-panelled walls,
In the corner by the chimney, in her old-accustomed place
Sits a fragile little lady with the firelight on her face;
And her eyes, a-dream and wistful, watch the flames and never tire—
She is seeking—always seeking—for the faces in the fire.

Ah, my lady, there's a face there more to you than all the rest!
'Mid the many dear and precious, there is one you love the best.
Oh, it's not so very handsome, but it's honest, and it's true,
And of all the world of faces it's the handsomest to you.
For your eyes grow soft and tender as a tongue of flame leaps higher,
And his steady eyes smile back among the faces in the fire.

Little lady, are you dreaming of his coming back some day,
Or his kneeling down to kiss you on the day he marched away?
Are you weaving dreams of glory, tinged with fame's effulgent glow,
Or do mem'ries rise to haunt you of your baby long ago?
Do you see him, chilled and weary, stumbling on thro' Flemish mire?
—What has dimmed your eyes, my lady, in your pictures in the fire?

Anne Page.

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THE DOCTOR OF LONE PINE

By Josephine Underwood Munford.

"The end is come of pleasant places,
The end of tender words and faces,
The end of all, the poppied sleep."

A flea-bitten white mare scrambled up the stony mountain path. Astride her, clad in baggy brown jeans and accoutred with worn canvas saddle-bags plus a smile more healing than the medicines they contained, sat a young-old man with a weather-beaten face and eyes as startlingly blue as all the blue moons of all the dreamers that have ever lived and dreamt.

His head was bare. The youthful glint of his eyes was belied by a hint of grey at the temples, which lent him, in spite of his careless garb, an incongruous air of distinction. The soft felt hat which slouched across the horn of his saddle was but little browner than the brown of his sun-tanned skin. The clear white of his teeth stood out by reason of his smile. Yet to the casual eye there was little to call forth joy in that forlorn, rain-washed trail.

"That's it, old girl. I'd put you against any goat that ever sprinted up the Rockies," he called to the mare, who, with much awkward spraddle of her splayed legs, achieved a foothold beyond a particularly difficult boulder. "We're almost up."

In five minutes more they reached the top, a desolate wilderness of scrub pines and starved undergrowth. In a clearing fifty yards to the right, its rough-hewn logs as ragged as the sticks of a magpie's nest, a tiny cabin clung precariously to the edge of a precipice.

The Doctor urged his mare into a still more eager scramble, and throwing the bridle-rein loose over her head, dismounted almost before she had come to a stop. He left her nosing a tree-stump while he knocked eagerly at the cabin door.

A laughing, level-eyed girl in a blue print dress opened it. The winsomeness of her native Surrey village was in her face; its soft, childish roundness suggested primroses, somehow, and English hedgerows. But her eyes held a craggy courage born of the new, untamed West, which she fought against and loved.

"Oh—it's you, Doctor! Have you been to the Hicks' again?"

"Yes. The baby's better. Just thought I'd drop in a minute, as long as I was passing this way." (That the Hicks' place lay five miles out of the way, beyond another spur of the mountains, was a fact unworthy of mention.)

"I'm awfully glad!" Cicely Daggett's voice dropped soberly. "I haven't seen you since Uncle Robin died. It's true I didn't see him often, but—I miss him. Home seems so much farther away with him gone. That is—until you come." She smiled at the Doctor with the simple, affectionate friendliness of a child.

The Doctor looked away.

"How's Jim?" he asked in an altered tone.

A quick flush stained Cicely's face for an instant, and vanished like a will-o'-the-wisp, leaving her paleness more apparent. Her voice held a pathetic, over-eager loyalty.

"Jim's fine! He hasn't missed work a single day for three months. He and Mr. Blain are getting on a lot better together. And oh, Hugh, it's so good for him! I tell him he's better-looking than ever. You must wait and see him."

A slight shadow crossed the Doctor's face. Neither of them touched on the cause that sometimes laid Jim up from work for a boisterous week.

"Can't, thanks. I've got to be getting back; I just looked in to see how you were."

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"That's dear of you, Hugh! I believe you still feel as responsible as when father sent me over to Uncle Robin in your care!" she said teasingly.

The Doctor laughed. But there was a troubled note in his laugh that did not escape Cicely's keen ears.

"Do you know, I'm getting to adore these mountains," she said in quick response to some imaginary, dreaded pity. "When I was living in our tight little village, sewing for the Dorcas Society, playing Patience with Aunt Deborah, and copying father's sermons, I used to dream of a wild, free life in the hills with—with Somebody. Only I didn't know Jim would be the Somebody! It's *glorious* up here in the springtime!"

The Doctor looked at her small hands, roughened with unaccustomed toil. He thought of the mountain winters, long, bleak, ruthless. He thought of Jim, with his physical beauty and his mental inferiority, with his boisterous weeks which no doubt had put the wrinkles between Cicely's young eyes. Like a fierce gust the longing swept him to pick her up like a child and carry her to the sweet safe home in Surrey that was his to offer her. The smile darkened and died from his eyes.

"I hadn't told you, Cicely. But I'm going home soon."

"*Home*, Hugh! To England? But not to stay?"

"That I can't say yet. The home place is—mine now. I must be seeing to it."

Cicely was silent. More than once she had wondered why Hugh Lansing stayed on in the little backwoods village of Lone Pine; why he dressed so carelessly and seemed to have lost all pride and interest except in his ill-requited service to the mountaineers, who were sometimes grateful, but more often not. Once he had not been lacking in ambition. Somehow she could not believe him lacking in it now. Sometimes she even went so far as to call it a sense of responsibility to herself that kept him there. Further than that she dared not go.

"Well, I must be off now, Cicely. I just looked in——"

"You're sure you won't wait and see Jim?"

"Can't—thanks."

"But you'll come to say good-bye before you sail?"

"Yes," said the Doctor in an odd voice. "I'll come—to say good-bye."

Cicely stood in the doorway for a moment while the Doctor whistled his mare, who came to him adoringly, like a dog. Then she entered the cabin. The white horse and its rider disappeared down the mountain path amid a scurrying splutter of stones.

The strange slothful calm of the warm April afternoon settled once more over the little clearing. The dry, nameless hum of unseen insects, the occasional soft plop of some mysterious earthward-dropping thing amid the scraggy pines, the lazy drifting of wide-spread wings far above in the blue, filled the air with a somnolent peace.

Suddenly it was rudely shattered.

A rugged, sweat-stained man staggered up the mountain-side. He reached the cabin, pushed open the door, and clung to the door facing, his breath forcing its way through his drawn, white lips in harsh, jerking sobs.

"Cicely! Quick! Oh, Cicely!"

From the kitchen a cheery voice answered, all unaware.

"Coo ee, Jim!" Cicely ran into the room gaily. She stopped short when she saw her husband's face. "What's the matter?"

The spent runner groped for a chair and flung himself into it, silent, staring, his head in his hands.

"Jim! You scare me! What is it? Tell me! Quick!"

Cicely Daggett pushed her thick auburn hair back with the impatience of a young doe divining danger, and grasped her boy husband by the sleeve, striving to read his tortured face.

He bore her scrutiny for a moment. Then his brown eyes, red with some scorching passion, shifted. The beautiful lines of his face were distorted, his mouth trembled weakly.

"Before God, I didn't mean to do it, Cicely! I went blind mad—he was always naggin' me—I didn't know what I was doin'. But when I saw him lying there, stark and still——"

The girl's face went whiter than his.

"Him? Blain?"

Jim nodded.

"God forgive me, I don't know how it happened. It was the drink again, curse it! When I saw the gash in his head, I cut and run. They'll find him in a little, and they knew I had it in for him. I must get away!"

Cicely's sweet mouth grew bloodless. Around the corners two drawn white streaks stood out like finger-prints of destiny.

"Is he—dead?"

Jim bowed his head in awe. Then he shook himself together, and his weak face took on a fictitious strength.

"Don't stand there staring!" he ordered with an oath. "Get me some grub together! Do you think I want to stay here and let them hang me?"

Cicely quivered as if struck with a lash.

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She wiped the flour from her trembling hands on her blue print dress and pulled a battered knapsack from under the bed. Hurriedly she stuffed food into it and clothes, Jim urging her on all the while, his eyes fixed anxiously on the open window.

He held out his hand for the bag. "Here!" That'll do! I must go."

Cicely clung to him, sobbing.

"Jim! Oh, my Jim! Where are you going, Jim?"

Jim's face twitched suddenly, and he kissed her hair roughly.

"Heaven knows I'm sorry. I'd give him back his life if I could. I hated him, but I didn't want to kill him. It was the drink——"

"Where are you going, Jim? What will you do?"

"The gulch—you know the big boulder, *our* rock, Cicely. Nobody knows about the hole underneath it. I can hide there till night. Then I'll get away somehow over the State line. I'll get you word——"

He kissed her again and was gone at a run, dodging in and out among the pines and ragged redwoods. Cicely stood rigid at the window, watching him. As he vanished presently over a spur of the mountains, she lifted her eyes to heaven in some wordless, tortured prayer.

Ten minutes later her keen ears caught the distant clatter of horses' hoofs on the stony path. Presently a little group of men rode up to the cabin door. Their leader, a leathern-faced mountaineer, leapt from his panting horse and flung open the door without ceremony. The other riders dismounted and surrounded the cabin.

A sewing-machine buzzed merrily within and a woman's voice was singing a gay little tune.

The grim Sheriff (who was likewise the Judge) hesitated. His assurance changed to an air of furtive caution.

"Warm evenin', Mrs. Daggett. Jim not home yet? I wanted to see him on a little business."

"I'm sorry he isn't here, Judge. Is anything—wrong?" asked Cicely, with just the proper note of ignorant anxiety in her voice. Then, as if seeing the men outside the windows for the first time, she rose to her feet. "Oh, what are those men for? What has happened?"

The Judge's shrewd eyes were fixed on her face, but not the quiver of an eyelid betrayed her desperate acting.

"There's been an accident," he said cautiously. "We want Jim to help us trace a man. When'll he be home?"

"I expect him any minute now. He usually comes home about this time. Won't your men come into the kitchen and wait? Was anybody hurt?"

It cost Cicely all her courage to ask that question, but she hid her white face and her dread of its answer in contemplation of the window. If only she could delay the Judge, if only the men would come in and wait, that would give Jim more time to reach the boulder, more chance of safety.

The rough-and-ready Judge was puzzled, yet he was a man of action.

"We've got cause to think the fellow we're after came this way. We'll have to search the place."

"But there's nobody here but me. I give you my word for it."

Her feigned objection strengthened his purpose, as she hoped it would. The search would delay them at least ten minutes.

Far too quickly for her it was over. All her wiles to detain the men longer failed. They leapt on their horses, the lust of a man-hunt gleaming in each weather-beaten face, lending an edge to their stupidity, making them wolfish. Jim Daggett was not beloved of that little band, and they hunted him much as they would have hunted a grizzly. They clattered over the stones at full tilt across the mountain side, leaving Cicely alone with the cold fear at her heart.

Dark had fallen with beneficent calm across the little clearing. The sky hung low like a soft black quilt tufted with stars. No light shone from the sombre cabin. In a chair in the kitchen Cicely sat stark and motionless. Time and darkness held no meaning for her. Her soul was far away beneath the boulder in the gulch, yearning over Jim, sharing his danger.

The door opened suddenly, and a man entered without greeting.

He approached the dark form silhouetted against the window.

"Has Hicks been here?"

With an aching throb of returning consciousness she recognised the deep, comforting tones of the Doctor. She gave an inarticulate moan and bowed her face in her hands. He crossed the room very simply, and put his arm around her in the gloom.

"I knew he would frighten you. It was all over the village that Blain was dead, but he is not. He's in my hospital, and I have already dressed his wounds. He is not dead, dear."

Cicely did not notice his term of endearment, but she rose from her seat at the shock of his wonderful news.

"Not dead! Oh, Hugh, Hugh! Bless you for coming to tell me!" In the frenzy of her relief she lifted her face impulsively

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and kissed him. The Doctor stood, strained and silent, in the dusk.

As he went away again alone down the trail a startling thought went with him. If Blain died—if Jim should hang for it—Cicely would be free. He shut out this thought resolutely. But it returned again when he arrived at his rude hospital and stood staring down at the bandaged face of Joseph Blain.

Cicely took the good news to her husband that night in his hiding-place, and he came home with her. For six days Blain was supposed to be recovering under Dr. Lansing's care in the little red brick shanty which served as a hospital in Lone Pine. Then septic poisoning set in in the wound, and he died.

The first Jim knew of this was when Judge Hicks appeared at his cabin at three o'clock in the morning, and arrested him for murder.

The trial was conducted with that refreshing simplicity and directness which characterised the justice of the West some fifty years ago. In a loft over the Post Office gathered a grim little band, composed of Judge and jury, with the prisoner in their midst. Cicely, a tense and slender figure, occupied a cane chair at the very back of the room, her black dress a pathetic, sombre blur against the raw plastered walls.

Jim sat hunched forward on an unpainted pine bench, his handsome, heavy features, at no time unduly alert, altogether soggy with bewilderment and grief. Two of the gangers at the works of which Blain had been foreman had already given their testimony against him. They had little love for him, partly because of a swagger which makes a certain type of rough Westerner long to shoot a man on sight, partly because of certain gaming transactions in which, while never running exactly against the law, he had failed to be what they called "white."

Blain, on the other hand, had been a rough, open-hearted sort of fellow, well-liked and even loved by many of his men, and feeling ran high against his slayer. The mind of the Court was practically made up before the first witness spoke his first word.

The prisoner lifted his head as the Doctor stood up, his face very white, his lips drawn and colourless, to give his evidence. Jim felt that in this man somehow lay his one hope. "Doc" was a friend of Cicely's; "Doc" would do anything he could to spare her pain. Though Jim was not a big man himself, nevertheless he felt, without thinking anything about it, that the Doctor was too big to profit by Cicely's suffering for any future hopes of his own. In other words, like everyone else in Lone Pine, unthinkingly, almost unconsciously, he trusted the Doctor.

The little smoky coal-oil lamp on the plain deal table flickered awesomely over the face of the new witness. Its shadows lent to that sombre countenance some of the mystery and the inscrutability of destiny.

"The death of Joseph Blain," he said in a toneless voice, "was caused by an abscess and suppuration of the brain resulting from a compound fracture of the skull due to direct violence. The scalp wound was about two inches long above the right ear. Septic poisoning set in, and contributed to the death."

"Is there any reason for doubt," asked the Judge, wiping his brow with a large bandana handkerchief, "that this here blow was the direct cause of his death?"

The Doctor looked at Jim, and contempt and pity shone together on his face. A slight spasm twitched his fine lips. Then he spoke quietly.

"There is no doubt whatever that the blow given was the direct cause of death."

Jim crouched back on his bench, and a shudder shook him from head to foot. He knew, as well as every other man present, that in those words lay his death sentence. Other witnesses were called and heard out mechanically. Their testimony only strengthened the outstanding fact that the blow on the head had caused Blain's death, that Jim's hand had struck the blow, and that Jim must pay.

The jury brought in a unanimous verdict of "Guilty."

At daybreak, when the first faint streaks of rose tipped the mountains, Jim was marched between grim guards up to meet the dawn and his fate at the top of Gushet Hill.

The Doctor was not with that ominous little procession. He stood in the deserted Court-room, looking down with strange eyes at Cicely Daggett. To her Fate, at the moment of its cruelty, had been kind. For after the long strain of the night, when the verdict was brought at last, she had fainted.

The Doctor had laid her tenderly on the same bench where Jim had sat to hear his sentence. Her slim figure, clad in black, looked as helpless and appealing as that of a child on whom some strange law of grown-ups has imposed a mourning beyond its years. Her white sailor hat, with its black band, had fallen to the floor, and her loosened, coppery hair dropped dishevelled about an exquisite but colourless face. Its lines were as pure as marble, but even in

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unconsciousness the brow was drawn with uncomprehended pain.

The Doctor made no effort to arouse her. He knew it was kinder to leave her so. But as he stood looking down on her yearningly she opened her wistful blue eyes. With the rush of consciousness their pupils dilated until they became black with pain.

"Where is he? I must go to him. Oh, I remember."

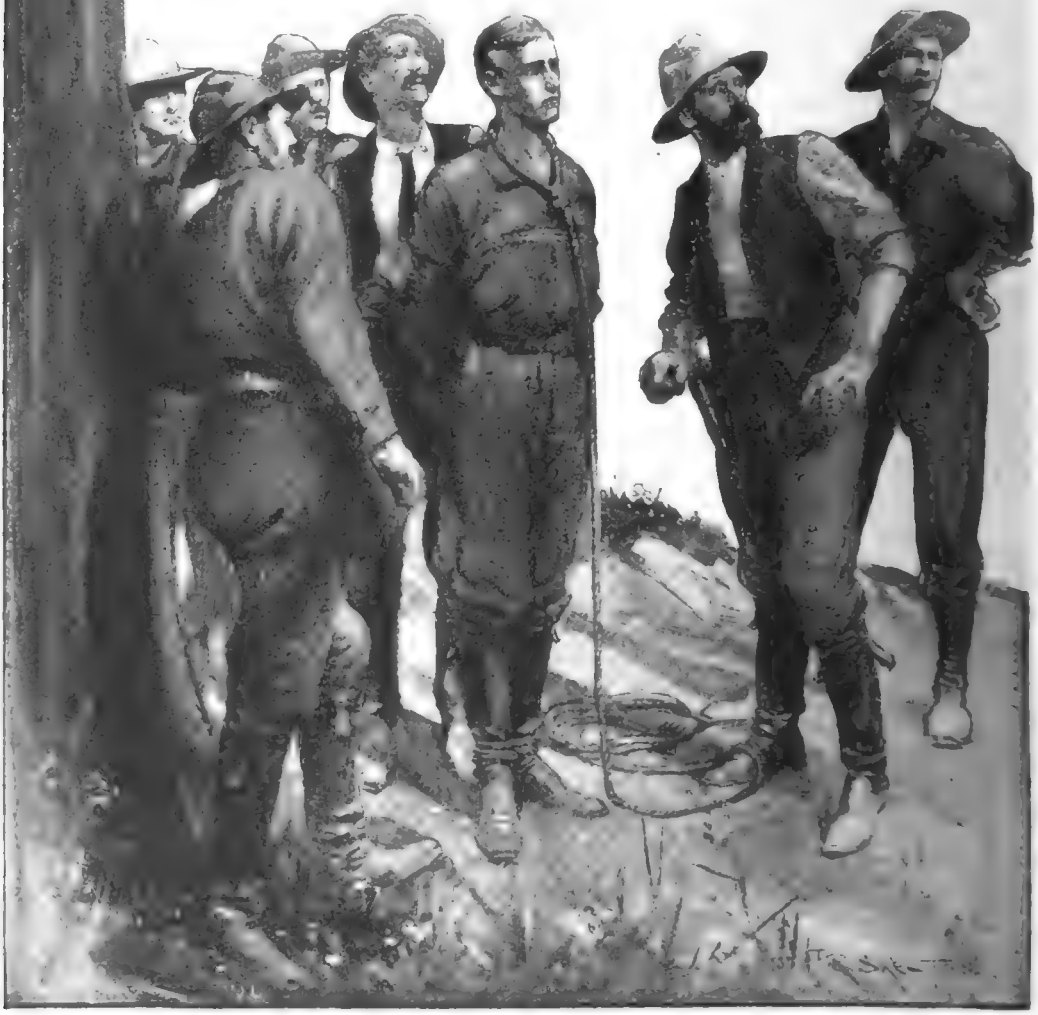
She struggled to her feet and ran to the door, but the Doctor stepped quietly in front of it, holding the knob.

"Cicely, you must not go—you must not see——"

"No, no! You are wrong! I must go! Oh, where have they taken him? I must see—I must pray them, on my knees."

It is not often that in one commonplace room in the space of one little hour a man touches both plummets of his destiny, sounding both the deepest baseness of which he is capable and the highest nobility. But such was the singular hour that came to the Doctor in that shabby little Court-room, where a man had just been condemned to be hanged.

He caught Cicely in his arms with a white-hot passion beyond all bounds of his normal character. But she, too wholly absorbed with her emotions to be conscious of his, mistook his embrace for some fervour of pity from the friend whom she had always leant upon and trusted.



At a nod from the Judge the men with the rope went forward to the redwood tree. At this moment the Doctor's white mare clambered over the spur of the hill.

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"Cicely, I love you. Don't grieve for him! Think how he has made you suffer! Think of the bare, hard life you lead—of all you have given up! Think of home—England! When it is over, Cicely—beloved!—I will take you home!"

This treachery in her direst hour so staggered Cicely that for a moment, in the apathy of her pain, disillusionment and bitter grief, she was incapable of a struggle. Then, with a force that brooked no resistance, she flung herself free of the Doctor and made her way past him to the door. With her hand on the knob she paused, outraged trust blazing in her eyes, her bosom heaving, her slight figure swaying like a flame before the wind.

"How *could* you! You are mad! Jim is mine — my own! Whatever he has done, I love him! And I will die with him!"

She flung open the door and was gone, fleeing down the foot-worn wooden stairs like a grief-driven spirit, herself pursued by spectres.

The passion dropped from the Doctor's face like the passing of a soul. Yet out of his look of bleak agony there arose a sudden exaltation. He stared unseeingly at the bare smoke-stained plaster walls, and far, far beyond them into a world where sin and the judgments of men were not. Then, with a quick squaring of his shoulders and a slight uplift of his head, he passed out of the door and down the stairs, running.

His white mare stood bare-backed in the stable a few yards down the street. He flung on her bridle and, without stopping for spurs

He leapt from her back and ran among the men, his face shining with a light not due to the glory of the rising sun. "Release your prisoner!" He flung out his right arm towards Jim in a gesture of absolute authority. [*Page 442, col 1.*]

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or saddle, leapt astride her and clattered down the crooked street, past astonished bystanders, towards the road that led to Gushet Hill. His keen eyes strained anxiously before him for the little *cortège* winding on foot up that serene, spring-clad pathway to the tree where Jim Daggett was to meet his fate.

The Doctor overtook the little band of executioners just at the top of Gushet Hill, as the sun broke, once for all, through the mysterious reticence of dawn into the full-blown glory of morning. They had gathered in a small clearing beneath a lone magnificent redwood, that looked serenely down upon their prisoner.

On the way up the trail there had been a scene pitiable in its grovelling importunings and futile struggles. But as Jim stood at last beneath the tree, all hope gone, his weak nature rose far above itself, and with that strange coward's courage that comes sometimes to the meanest in the face of the inevitable, he stood awaiting the end with a fortitude almost sublime. When given a chance to say his last words, he startled every man present with his quiet sentence: "It's all right, boys. Tell Cicely it's all right."

At a nod from the Judge the men with the rope went forward to the redwood tree.

At this moment the Doctor's white mare clambered over the spur of the hill. He leapt from her back and ran among the men, his face shining with a light not due to the glory of the rising sun.

"Release your prisoner!"

He flung out his right arm towards Jim in a gesture of absolute authority.

The group faced him as one man. The hangman, in his surprise, dropped the rope. The Judge stepped quickly to the Doctor and laid a hand on his arm.

"It's all right, Doc! Don't you get excited. You come over here with me quietly. It will all be over in a few minutes."

"I'm not excited, Judge." The Doctor dismissed him with scarcely a glance. "I've something to say to you, boys, and if you'll listen quietly I'll get it done quickly and then you can proceed."

He stepped upon a small flat boulder that raised him above the rest as if he were on a platform. The men stood grouped about him, perplexed, uneasy, but the guard about Jim in no way relaxed their vigilance.

"Boys, I gave evidence last night in the Lone Pine Court House against Jim there, charged with the murder of Joseph Blain. He is not guilty. I want to make that very clear. His attack on Blain was a simple assault, nothing more. And with proper care Blain would have been all right in a week." He paused a moment as if to make sure that every man was listening. Then his voice cut clear on the mountain air with a ring that was like a challenge: "*He did not get that care.*"

The perplexity on his listeners' faces changed to amazement and then anger. They began muttering uneasily among themselves. Jim's gaze was fixed on the Doctor.

The Doctor's voice continued, clearly and without hesitation. He might have been a disembodied witness for truth in an affair with which he had no personal concern.

"The force of the blow from the drill had driven hairs of the head into Blain's wound. These should have been removed. Such as could be removed by hand the nurse attended to. I was to have removed the others."

He hesitated, and the exaltation in his fine face became higher, shining from the blue eyes like a keen white flame.

"It's me you're after, boys, not Jim Daggett there. I left those hairs in Blain's wound—*on purpose.* I meant him to die, and he did die. I knew that would get Daggett out of my way. But I can't hold to it, boys. Let Jim there go free. I'm the man you're after."

Dead silence settled over the men under the tree. Jim's guards stepped a little away from him. The Judge and his jury, who were also captors and executioners, eyed each other in a dismay that would have been ludicrous had it not hung on tragedy.

The Doctor was loved, but so had Joseph Blain been loved. And all at once the enormity of the Doctor's offence, the "yellowness," as those men would have put it, of letting another life be jeopardised for his crime, rushed over them. The maw of justice yawned wide, demanding to be filled. Their blood was up. The rope and the tree were ready. With an inarticulate snarl they who had been his friends closed in upon the Doctor like wolves upon a member of their own pack when he is down.

A woman's cry cut across the sweet April air. Cicely struggled into view over the spur of the hill, and Jim, whose guards had forgotten him, ran to her and took her in his arms.

The Doctor saw their meeting at the moment when the first avenger of justice laid rough hands on him. He had just time to note the glint of the sun on Cicely's auburn hair where a twig of chaparral had fallen and clung, green with the promise of soft buds. He suffered himself to be dragged from the boulder towards the waiting redwood tree, a smile on his lips.

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Mr. Bertram Prance suggests that Mr. Madder Brown had a merciful escape when he called to submit specimens of his drawings, since they were calculated to rouse murderous instincts in even the mildest Art Editor.

NARROW SHAVES.

By Lesbia Robinson.

Miraculous Escapes, Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

We are told on competent authority that some people are born with silver spoons in their mouths, but there are cases in which a roll of bandages and some sticking-plaster would be far more appropriate. There are some people who from their youth up are dogged by accident and disaster; as babies they fall out of bed or swallow hatpins and other articles not intended for food, while in their later years they are always on the verge of destruction from motor-'buses, tinned salmon, or some of the other perils that afflict mankind.

It is a remarkable fact that many people who have spent their lives courting death, and come through unscathed, succumb finally to a minor danger, such as a piece of orange peel or a chimney-pot that has slipped its moorings. Mr. Shave was a case in point. As a baby he had tumbled into a bath of scalding water, dined off a tin of blacking, and swallowed innumerable matches, while his school-days were punctuated by broken ribs, bruises, and black eyes.

In due course he became a mining engineer, and waged pitched battles with the forces of nature in South America. Here he encountered all the hair-raising adventures generally reserved for cinema heroes. Once a rock as big as a Dreadnought, seeking change of air, skimmed past him in its descent from the mountain-side, missing him by a hair; twice he was nearly swallowed up by greedy and riotous rivers; while, to make matters still more exciting, he insisted on riding a horse with decided tendencies towards ballet-dancing. Nevertheless, he lived to return to England, marry a buxom English girl, and settle down in the peaceful security

"A Tribute from the Army"—Mr. Cottington Taylor gives us the susceptible sub. who nearly lands himself in a hole through his keen eye for beauty.

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of a semi-detached villa replete with modern conveniences.

It was here amidst the blameless oak and chintz of civilisation that he, who had emerged triumphant from pestilence, famine, and kindred ills, nearly met an untimely end through the contemptible agency of an eightpenny haddock. Fish-bones, as everyone knows, are born to be death-traps for men, and an out-size one of obstinate disposition, lodged securely in Mr. Shave's throat, threatened for several breathless minutes to put an end to his career. Ultimately, when his face had assumed an unbecoming shade of petunia and his distraught wife was making ineffectual attempts to secure the bone with the sugar-tongs, the impossible happened—her husband gave a herculean gulp, the bone appeared once more in public, and saved him from a distressing and humiliating end.

The miraculously narrow squeak of a gallant "Tommy" who entered into too close an acquaintance with a shell, illustrated by Mr. Bert Thomas.

Some people who are not a prey to physical ills go through life on the verge of shipwreck owing to a fatal capacity for making blunders, from the dire results of which they are only saved by extraordinary luck or the painstaking efforts of their friends. Mr. Daft was one of these. He lived always on the brink of social disaster, and had it not been for the tactful genius of his young wife, who had all the diplomacy of the ideal ambassador, would have ostracised all his friends and neighbours by his amazing *faux pas*.

His most blatant blunder, over which he had a narrow shave of spending the night in prison, occurred when, returning late from the theatre, he walked up to the wrong house and attempted to open the door with his own latchkey. Finding the key did not act, and being loath to disturb his wife, he proceeded to force a window.

Of course, it never occurred to him to start his housebreaking career at the scullery or some other secluded window; instead, he chose the dining-room, and, in full view of a passing policeman, strove ineffectually to force the window with a clasp-knife. Five minutes later he was in the grasp of a burly officer of the law, who demanded in highly decorative language what he meant by his suspicious conduct, and laughed—a throaty, unbelieving laugh—when Mr. Daft suggested that he had a perfect right to enter his own house in any fashion he thought proper.

"Your own 'ouse!

"Breaking His Fall"—Mr. Alfred Leete portrays an old gentleman who met with a great reverse, and was only saved by the opportune appearance of a pet dog.

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And ain't I been asked to keep a special eye on this 'ere place, because a female party lives 'ere alone, and is mortal scared of burglars and sich like?" exclaimed the policeman in righteous indignation.

Even then the obvious truth did not dawn on the thick-skulled Daft, who beat out a furious tattoo with the door-knocker as a summons to his long-suffering wife to come and identify him.

"'Ave it your own way!" sighed the police-constable as the light in the hall went up and shuffling feet were heard approaching.

"My dear"—the overwrought Mr. Daft stepped into the hall the moment the door was opened—"this police-constable——" Then he broke off abruptly as he faced, not his neat, fair-haired wife, but a large and shapeless lady who would obviously never see seventy again.

"Nearly Torpedoed"—how "Jack" nearly came a cropper ashore, depicted by Mr. Reg. F. Smith.

"S'pose you want me to believe you married yer great-aunt!" muttered the officer, with an outraged glance at the youthful Mr. Daft, who stood twirling his hat and stuttering incoherent apologies.

"It's perfectly outrageous!" the lady of the house was saying. "Of course, he's a common thief. Arrest him at once, constable!" At which the policeman took a firm grip of the little man's arm and prepared to march him off to the police-station.

What would have been the sequel had not his wife, who had been sitting up for her husband, scented calamity and come to the gate to look for him at the very moment he passed, can only be guessed. As it was, the constable yielded gracefully to the explanations of Mrs. Daft, who spoke with the tongue of men and angels, with the result that her agitated husband spent the night in bed instead of in the dismal fastnesses of the local police-station.

"The Soring Offensive Begins"—Mr. Thomas Henry reminds us that March winds may bring down chimney-pots on our defenceless heads.

"Exceeding the Speed Limit"—Esmond illustrates the majesty of the law endangered by the amateur motorist.

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MAKING A MAN OF HIM

By Dorothy Rose.

"A guardian angel o'er his life presiding,
Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing."

I.

When Tony Bedford enlisted, the village of Bramblegate mourned his departure with a sense of personal loss. Tony was that sort of boy—a sunny, light-hearted, lovable lad, with a frank, manly face and observant blue eyes that held the eager expectancy of youth in their clear depths. He had a cheery word and smile for housewives and children alike as he swung along the village street in his daily journeys to and from Redcot Farm, where he was finishing a course of farming preparatory to setting out for Canada to carve out for himself a career.

Only his mother made no open lament at his going, but bore herself with a serenity that her neighbours regarded as absolutely callous, little knowing that in her son's enlistment Mrs. Bedford saw the attainment of a goal which so far she had striven vainly to reach. Tony's father had been a careless, kind-hearted wastrel; he had brought her from comparative wealth to a mere sufficiency, had made her life a long torment of anxiety and apprehension, had shattered all her youthful illusions, and left her a warped, embittered woman.

In Tony she saw the characteristics which in his father had made shipwreck of her life; what she did not see was that behind the boy's high spirits and buoyancy was a stability and resolution inherited from her; that although at twenty-four Tony was still amazingly young, he was far from weak. Firmly ingrained in her mind was the belief that it was her duty to quell his high spirits, to uproot his love of gaiety lest it led him into the path his father had trodden with such disastrous results. And now Fate had taken the matter out of her hands; the Army would harden him, teach him self-discipline, turn him from a careless, high-spirited boy into a sober, resolute man.

Until the war broke out and a critical but fatherly Sergeant replaced her as guide, philosopher, and friend to Tony, Mrs. Bedford's chief hope had been Constance. Constance was her niece, and, being an orphan, had made her home with them since childhood. At twenty-three she was a sedate, law-abiding soul, with excessively neat brown hair and an air of gentle gravity. Her blouses were always cut high at the neck—V necks were "not nice"—and she wore ribbed cashmere stockings all the year round. In Mrs. Bedford's opinion her staid, well-ordered nature would be the finest antidote in the world to Tony's irresponsible temperament, and she lost no opportunity of instilling into the boy's mind the many virtues of his very commonplace cousin.

In her plans for the regeneration of Tony through Constance, Peggy, the young daughter of the village doctor, was the most disturbing influence. Peggy had silky brown hair that waved naturally about a laughing face, and in Mrs. Bedford's opinion was prettier than any respectable girl had a right to be. Her eyes were the limpid, changing grey-brown of moorland pools; her little round chin held a distracting dimple, and her blouses were cut with a becoming V that showed the youthful lines of her pretty white throat. In sheer gaiety and sparkle she rivalled Tony himself; she was what that young gentleman called "an out-and-out sport," and what Constance designated as "extremely unladylike."

Peggy's grief at Tony's departure was genuine and unconcealed, though the sight of his splendid appearance in uniform and the presentation of a regimental badge somewhat allayed her despair. She wrote to him regularly—chatty, comradely letters full of laughter and sympathy, leaving his mother and Constance to chronicle the doings of the Dorcas Society, and to give advice as to warm underwear and deference to his superior officers.

In due course Tony, brown as a berry and magnificently fit, came home on a few days' leave. It gave his mother a pang to see that to all intents and purposes he was still as boyish, as boisterous and irresponsible as in the old days. He still forgot to wipe his feet on the mat, his slang was even more frequent and mystifying, his movements as disquieting as ever.

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"He must try for a commission," declared Mrs. Bedford to the sympathetic Constance. "Perhaps responsibility will steady him."

Approached on the subject, Tony owned it might be "rather sport" to be an officer, and expressed his willingness to oblige.

So it was that in due course he joined other kindred souls in an O.T.C., and after several months of hard training was admitted per favour of the *London Gazette* to the fellowship of Second-Lieutenants, and the dignity of a star on his cuff. A few weeks later—it was in the early spring—he was granted twenty-four hours' leave preparatory to departure for the Front, and burst upon the admiring populace of Bramblegate in all the glory of his new uniform and resplendent buttons.

It came as a positive blow to his mother to find him as exuberant and light-hearted as ever. If he realised his responsibilities, they sat lightly upon him, and he refused to discuss his duties save in terms of such flippant irrelevance that his mother and Constance commenced a joint attack over the tea-table.

"I hope you'll remember that the men will look to you as their officer for an example," said his mother, somewhat mollified by his evident appreciation of her home-made scones.

"That's all right, Mater," sang out Tony with youthful confidence. "They'll eat out of my hand after the first day or two. Case of 'everywhere that Tony went, the men were sure to go!' I promise you not to teach 'em my most priceless swear words, and I'll make them learn a hymn every Sunday."

Mrs. Bedford's heart sank as her querulous gaze rested on the bronzed, handsome young face across the bowl of daffodils. He was so like his father—the same challenging twinkle in his blue eyes, the same persuasive smile, the same persistent refusal to take serious things with becoming gravity.

Constance took up the attack in her precise, matter-of-fact way. She had added a white lace collar to her navy blue frock as a concession to Tony's arrival, and a spiritless red bow drooped unbecomingly at her throat.

"You ought to realise, Tony, that the men's lives are in your keeping," she said, spreading jam with a methodical care that made her cousin long to empty the jar into her lap.

"Oh, come, not as bad as that," remonstrated Tony. "I'm not a Brigadier-General, you know, and I can't run about and gather them in when things get hot, as though they were kids and I was calling 'em in to tea. They wouldn't like it, and the Gilded Staff would become offensive. Let's give the war the go-by for a bit. I want to hear all the latest scandal. How's Peggy?"

"Peggy is perfectly well, I believe." Mrs. Bedford stated the fact as though it were a matter for regret. "She'll probably come round later on."

"Wonder why she didn't come to tea?" said Tony between his attacks on the jam-sandwich. "Hope she still loves me as much as ever."

"Peggy is very much occupied just now." Constance's tone was faintly reproving. "You may not believe it, but she has actually taken up dairy work, and is working at Redcot Farm. Milks cows, and, I believe, even cleans out cow-sheds!"

"Most unladylike!" Mrs. Bedford chimed in from behind the best blue and gold china. "I can't think what Dr. Richmond was thinking of to give his consent."

"Unladylike! Why, it's simply great! She said something about it in her letters. Peggy always was a little sport," exclaimed Tony. "I think, if you don't mind, Mater, I'll cut along and look her up," he added, nearly overturning the table in his anxiety to escape from an atmosphere which was fast becoming uncongenial.

He found Peggy in the orchard, beautiful with the vivid green of spring, looking like a spring fairy herself in a pink blouse that echoed the tint of the apple-blossom above her head. To Tony, divorced so long from feminine companionship, she had never seemed so enchanting. The sun turned her golden-brown hair into a lambent glory, the welcome in her eyes warmed his heart, her little air of motherly pride and solicitude was wholly charming.

Hitherto he had looked upon Peggy solely as a pal; his attitude had been that of an elder brother. Now, as he guided her to a fallen tree, his fingers closed about her arm; he felt a masculine appreciation of its soft roundness, a delicious thrill in the knowledge of his own strength and her adorable weakness.

"It's good-bye, Peggy, this time," he said as they sat down side by side, and Peggy arranged her brown skirt about her trim, brown silk-stockinged ankles. "I'm off at seven in the morning. Will you come and see me off?"

"I'd rather say good-bye here, Tony," she replied, lifting sweetly serious eyes to his. "You see, your—your mother isn't wildly enthusiastic about me, and she might resent it. She thinks it's unladylike to milk cows, so I've fallen very low in her estimation lately."

"You're a little brick!" Tony covered the hand that lay on the log with his big

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brown one. "The Mater seems to have taken Constance as a type of 'the perfect woman'; they've both been pitching into me about being a model officer and setting an example to the men."

"You'll do that, old boy." Peggy's voice was very soft. "You'll go straight and hit hard and be first over the parapet. That's all they'll ask!"

"Bless you, Peg! You do put heart into a chap; for, of course, I *am* a bit of a fool, and I should hate to fail the men—they're such devilish fine chaps. You always understand so well, kiddie. Now, Constance thinks I ought to hold family prayers in the trench every morning, and substitute barley-water for the rum issue."

Peggy threw back her golden-brown head and laughed, the clear, liquid laugh of happy youth. Tony, looking at her, wondered why he had never before noticed the delicious curve of her rounded chin and throat.

"Constance is a model of virtue," said Peggy, "but she hasn't much sense of humour."

"And yet the Mater wants me to marry her!" Tony got up and kicked the log resentfully. "Fancy marrying Constance! Ye gods! I'd just as soon marry a Hindoo idol."

"But you'll marry some time, Tony?" Peggy propped her chin between her hands and looked up at him with the wistfulness of dawning womanhood in her candid eyes.

"Plenty of time for that when we've finished strafing the Huns," returned Tony cheerily. For the present the war, his new duties, and the unknown adventures to be met on the battle-fields of Flanders held first place in his mind. His added appreciation of Peggy's charm he put down to the fact of their separation; she was a great little pal—the very perfection of their friendship prevented any thought of other relations entering his mind. Manlike, he did not recognise the symptoms of love; they may come to a man unrecognised, but seldom, if ever, to a woman.

So while he chatted gaily of what awaited him across the Channel, and dilated on the completeness of his new equipment, and the possibilities of securing a German helmet for her delectation, Peggy sat with a dull ache at her heart and a smile on her lips, facing the knowledge that with his going she entered upon the heritage of anxiety and loneliness which comes to every woman whose best-beloved goes forth to face ordeal by battle.

"Well, good-bye, kiddie!" Tony's face grew grave for a moment as Peggy rose from the log and stood pale and unfaltering before him. Something—the yearning in her soft brown eyes, the bravely smiling lips—caught at his heart; he put his hands on her slim shoulders, and, bending down, kissed her lightly on the cheek. "Just for luck!" he said; "we've always been such pals."

"Good-bye, Tony!" His kiss, though he did not know it, was to her a sacrament, something to cling to in the long, dreary days that yawned before her. "Good-bye, and always good luck!" Her hand trembled a little in his, but her voice never quavered.

"Good-bye!" He smiled gaily, his winning, unforgettable smile, saluted smartly, and turning on his heel strode away through the green-and-white fairyland of the orchard.

II.

At first Tony's letters were joyous and light-hearted as of yore, but after a time even his irrepressible spirits could not always surmount the dismal monotony and hardship of the trenches. The more serious tone, the sober outlook which crept occasionally into his letters rejoiced his mother's heart, while they rent Peggy's and filled her soul with desolation.

"He's beginning to steady down; it's making a man of him," observed Mrs. Bedford to Constance over her knitting.

"He's having a rotten time; he'll never be a boy again," whispered Peggy into her pillow when she lay awake at night in the fragrant silence of her blue-and-white bedroom.

The first chrysanthemums were raising their shaggy heads, ruby, canary, and tawny gold, amid the draggled greenery of departed summer, when the news came that Tony had been promoted, and was now entitled to twin stars on his war-worn khaki. His mother received the news with grim approval as a token of an increasing sense of responsibility, while Peggy sang for sheer pride that *her* pal was counted worthy of advancement, and made an extra rich cake for him to celebrate the occasion.

When the crocuses thrust yellow spears through the soft brown earth and the daffodils nodded in Peggy's blue bulb-bowls, news came that Tony was wounded, and lying in a base hospital with shrapnel wounds in both his legs, and a bullet in his right arm. The letter, written by a nurse, roused even Mrs. Bedford from her stoical calm, while Peggy's heart was torn with anxiety and longing to be of service.

Even when, Tony's arm having recovered sufficiently for him to write, they learnt fuller details of his condition, there was a suspicious vagueness and restraint about his letters. His wounds were doing well, he hoped to be sent to "Blighty" shortly, and they were not to worry. Of real information as to his condition there was none, and Peggy, reading

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"Well, good-bye, kiddie!" Tony's face grew grave for a moment as Peggy . . . stood pale and unfaltering before him . . . He put his hands on her slim shoulders, and, bending down, kissed her lightly on the cheek. "Just for luck!" he said.

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between the lines, was filled with a strange apprehension.

And then came the news that he was coming home, whereat the kindly Doctor at once offered to meet him in London and bring him home in his car, as less fatiguing to an invalid than the slow and tedious journey by a jolting branch line train to Bramblegate. Mrs. Bedford refused to accompany him—she would wait to welcome her son at home. Mingled with her undoubted pleasure at the prospect of seeing him again, Peggy fancied she detected a certain resentment at the fate which removed him from the midst of the discipline and hardship from which she had hoped so much.

"If we aren't very careful he will drop back into the old careless ways," she said to Constance, as together they made his bedroom hideous with starched curtains; his beloved cricket bat, fishing rods, and other boyish litter had been removed directly he went to the Front. "He'll want to rush all over the place with Peggy—tennis, long walks, cricket—I know what it will be, and she'll make him just as careless and frivolous as herself again. I won't have it, Constance. I won't have the work of all these months set at naught by a minx who wears silk stockings and a low-necked blouse."

It was dark when the motor drove up to the house, and Mrs. Bedford was putting the final touches to the supper-table. She opened the front door to be confronted by the burly form of the Doctor and a taller figure, both shadowy in the shaded light of the hall.

"Here you are! Wipe your boots, my dear." Mrs. Bedford uttered the words from habit as the tall figure walked forward slowly into the hall. "Why——" she stopped abruptly as he came within the circle of light, and her austere face grew suddenly ashy white.

Tony would never wipe his boots again. He walked painfully on crutches. One leg was off above the knee, the other hung limp and useless, and the face he bent to hers was as the face of an old man.

III.

To Tony the prospect of being dependent on others for the rest of his life was exceeding bitter; his active nature rebelled at every point against the restrictions which hamper a man who cannot move without painful effort, and then only with the help of crutches. Even Dr. Richmond's cheery assurance that his left leg would probably recover with time and judicious massage failed to rouse him from the stupor of disappointment and resentment that enveloped him.

To his mother the sight of his thin, pain-weary face and hopeless eyes was a continual reproach. She had prayed that Fate might make a man of him, might rid him of his boyish irresponsibility, and Fate had taken her at her word, and answered her prayers with a thoroughness of which she had never dreamt. In her agony of repentance it seemed to her like a judgment, as if she personally were responsible for his pitiable condition; in her new mood of humiliation and self-reproach she felt there was nothing she would not do to atone and make life more bearable for him.

In Tony's nervous, dejected state, an over access of sympathy and devotion was the worst possible thing. His mother's constant solicitude wearied him; her painstaking efforts at anticipating his requirements only served to remind him of his own helplessness. She bewailed continually and from mistaken motives of sympathy what she called "his blighted future," and discouraged his spasmodic attempts to shed his invalid habits lest the effort should be too much for his strength.

As for Constance, her presence was a continual irritation, for she assumed an attitude of fussy protectiveness which, as Tony put it in one of his somewhat frequent outbursts, "made a fellow feel like a blinking one-year-old."

In those days life would, indeed, have been black for Tony had it not been for Peggy; young as she was—perhaps by reason of her youth—she realised that to harp on his infirmities, to acquiesce in his hopeless outlook, was the worst possible policy. It was Peggy who coaxed him into the garden to enjoy the early spring sunshine, Peggy who persuaded him to get accustomed to his crutches, Peggy who cajoled him from his moods of depression with jig-saw puzzles or dominoes. Whereas the others dwelt on his disabilities, she painted for him the possibilities that life still held, giving him hope, a saner outlook, the ghost of an interest in what the future might hold even for a man crippled as he was.

Seeing how things were, Mrs. Bedford's aversion to Peggy melted as if by magic. She could not but own that, though she and Constance might surround him with care and protection, it was Peggy who supplied the sunshine and roused him to face his crippled future with a certain degree of courage and optimism. Her heart warmed to the girl instinctively, and she began to realise that a nature which can infect others with its own sunny light-heartedness is indeed a gift of the gods.

Spring came with its faint blue skies and emerald leafage, bluebells made vivid patches

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amidst the sepia shadows of the woods, and the orchards were a fairyland of foaming white and rosy blossoms. The waking life, the youth and beauty of the year, mocked at Tony as he sat beside the chintz-curtained window, his thin, handsome face set in lines of weary indifference that brought a mist to Peggy's brown eyes and a note of anxiety to his mother's usually even tones.

"Dr. Richmond feels sure a few months at Cliff-on-Sea will do you good, and there are some nice bungalows there. Mrs. Greatorex had one, and there was every convenience—an excellent range, and gas laid on. It isn't far; I think you could stand the journey if we had a car all the way."

"Of course he could!" Peggy noted the resentful twist of Tony's lips at his mother's over-solicitude. "It will be the very thing! Boating, golf, bathing—you'll love it, Tony."

"But, my dear, you forget"—Mrs. Bedford stopped Peggy's enthusiasm with a faintly reproachful air—"Tony can't get about much. He must be very careful not to overtire himself. He can't——"

"Don't see why on earth I shouldn't go boating," put in Tony; "and now I'm getting on a bit I might do a little mild rambling. Dr. Richmond said judicious exercise would be good for my leg; but you're all so bent on keeping me wrapped up in cotton-wool. I might be a priceless piece of porcelain at a museum," he added with a spirit that it did Peggy's heart good to see.

"Then you think you'd like the change, dear?" Mrs. Bedford's austere face softened to a new motherliness; she fluttered to his side, her hands adjusting the mauve silk cushion behind his head, which, as a matter of fact, needed no adjusting at all.

"I should like it if Peggy comes too." Tony's blue eyes, drained now of their youthful expectancy, turned slowly to where Peggy sat, her vivid little face, with its frame of golden-brown hair, looking like some brilliant flower against the severe background of mahogany furniture and dull grey walls.

"My dear boy, I couldn't." Peggy regarded the toes of her brown brogues with deep attention, her cheeks a little flushed. "They're quite tiny bungalows, you know, and besides, what about my cows and milk-pails?"

"Of course, if you're going to study the cows more than you do me," began Tony fretfully, but Peggy stopped him with her gay, ringing laugh.

"Don't be an absurd little boy," she said lightly, as she rose to her feet, anxious to get away lest she should betray her overmastering delight that he wanted her, that all her loving service had not been in vain. But Peggy was proud—Tony might want her—thank God, *did* want her—but even her love and devotion could not reconcile her to being an unwelcome guest. Until Mrs. Bedford asked her to accompany them, she could not possibly consent to go. "I'm coming to take you for a trot up the lane to pick primroses to-morrow morning. No excuses, mind!" and she wagged a warning finger at him as she paused to shake hands.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Bedford!" Peggy's voice was very gentle. She understood something of what this proud, reserved woman had suffered since Tony's return.

"Good-bye, my dear!" For a moment she held the girl's hand, a flicker of uncertainty on her thin face; she seemed about to speak, wavered, and closed her lips again with a little air of finality.

Peggy was half-way down the red-flagged path, bordered by wallflowers and late daffodils, when a step sounded behind her. She turned, lips apart, wavy hair blown lightly by the breeze beneath her pansy velvet hat, to see Mrs. Bedford standing hatless before her. There was a certain grim determination about the set of her mouth, but her rather expressionless grey eyes held an entreaty before which Peggy felt a sudden, strange compassion.

"I don't think—perhaps you didn't quite understand—how—how much Tony counts on your coming with us to Cliff-on-Sea," she said, her faltering voice telling something of what it cost her to make the advance. "He—he will be very disappointed if you don't come. It may be a bit dull for you, but——"

"Oh, it isn't that! Please believe it isn't that." Peggy caught the work-worn hand in hers impulsively. "I should love to come, but it isn't enough for Tony to want me—Tony's mother must want me, too. I couldn't go where I wasn't welcome."

"My dear, I do want you." Mrs. Bedford forgot the brown silk stockings, the V neck to Peggy's lavender blouse—she remembered only that this joyous young thing with the dewy brown eyes and the soft, rounded chin had a magic in dealing with Tony which age and experience had never yielded to her. "I do want you," she repeated, "both for the boy's sake and my own."

"Then I'll come!" Peggy bent forward and kissed the pale cheek, her face shining with gratitude that the chance to serve the man she loved was to be hers. "Cliff-on-Sea is a glorious little place—in five or six weeks Tony'll be as lusty as a Greek god. But will there be room? What about Constance?"

"Constance isn't coming." Mrs. Bedford's

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lips set in a line of resolution. "She only worries the boy, and does him more harm than good," a confession which sent Peggy dancing homewards with a new, exultant hope in her heart.

IV.

Cliff-on-Sea worked wonders for Tony—Cliff-on-Sea and Peggy, for the beauty of golden sands and dimpling blue sea would have availed little to rouse him had it not been for the infectious enjoyment of his comrade. Daily massage did much for his partly paralysed leg; Peggy's glad optimism and undaunted encouragement did more for his embittered young soul. She refused from the outset to let him dwell on his limitations; she showed him the many joyous things still possible to him; she devised new occupations, fresh interests, brought him back to a healthy outlook on life, and laughed away the idea that he was no longer of any use in the world.

In those days of early summer Peggy set herself to give him back something of his old pulsing joy in life, and in the process grew from a light-hearted, care-free girl to a radiant, tender woman. There was a touch of gravity in her wide eyes, an unfathomable sweetness about her smile that touched even Mrs. Bedford's heart to appreciation and sympathy. And as she saw her son creeping slowly back to health and cheerfulness, she opened her heart to Peggy and was content.

The discovery that he was not cut off from all outdoor sports came to Tony as a revelation. He found that boating and fishing were quite possible, and spent enchanted hours with Peggy in the blue waters of the rock-fringed bay. As his game leg improved and he grew accustomed to his crutches, he found walking once more a pleasure, and roamed the green-topped cliffs near the bungalow, and made little expeditions to the cluster of white cottages dignified by the name of village.

Lord Babbacombe, the kindly magnate of Bramblegate, who had always taken a great interest in Tony, lent one of his cars to the wounded warrior, and Tony experienced the delights of teaching a greatly elated Peggy to drive.

So to Tony came peace and a measure of happiness, marred only by the knowledge that a career in Canada was inevitably denied to him, and by the aching conviction that as a crippled man he had no shadow of right to ask Peggy to be his wife. For these days of constant companionship had taught him among other lesser things that the old frank *camaraderie*, the old careless affection were not enough, that Peggy was not a part of his world, but held its entire glory in the hollow of her small brown hands.

On the day when Tony's game leg was pronounced fit, they held high festival together. The scene of the celebration was Beach Cove, a tiny stretch of gold and turquoise set in a frame of ebony cliffs. They drove there in the car, and had a picnic tea on a grassy ledge that overhung the beach. Peggy, bewitching in a white frock and hyacinth blue silk sports coat, presided over the feast, while Tony, propped against a convenient mound, watched her with silent yearning in his once-confident blue eyes.

Tea over and the last cake packed away, Mrs. Bedford, with amazing and new-found tact, announced her intention of walking to the village in quest of new-laid eggs, and the two young people sat watching the whispering waves as they lapped the base of the cliffs.

There was a dreamy peace over the sunlit land. A brown-sailed fishing boat glided across the mouth of the bay; the little pools among the rocks shimmered with golden light. A sense of rest and contentment wrapped Tony about, smoothing the lines from his still lean face, giving it back a little of its old buoyancy and eager confidence. His hand stole out and closed over Peggy's as it lay on the grass between them.

"I haven't thanked you yet, kiddie—I never can thank you properly—for what you've done for me," he said. "You've given me back hope and belief in my own powers. You've taught me that the world is still a very splendid place, that life even to a crippled man may yet be gloriously worth while. I can't thank you, Peggy—there aren't words for it."

There was a touch of the mother-look in the clear brown eyes Peggy turned to his. "It was your own courage pulled you through," she said softly. "If I helped I am very, very proud."

"Helped! Ye gods! You did it off your own bat," exclaimed Tony. "God bless you for it."

"And now"—Peggy's fingers trembled in his, but she did not draw them away—"now you're going to do great things. Not Canada, I know, but I had a letter from Dad this morning, and he says Lord Babbacombe wants a tenant for The Gabled House. He is willing to let it very cheap—you have your pension and a little money as well—there's plenty of room to keep fowls and a few cows, and to grow fruit and vegetables. Why not take it, and start a model farm of your own? You've got the knowledge and experience; you can get someone else to do the actual hard work. It would keep you going and

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give you an interest in life. Don't you think it's a beautiful idea?"

"Great!" The eager look on Tony's face faded suddenly to one of brooding. "But the Mater would never live on a farm; she hates cows and pigs, and she doesn't know a thing about fowls. She wouldn't be an atom of help, even if she'd consent to live there."

"But you may marry. There's a duck of a drawing-room, all white paint and lilac paper," mused Peggy, fingering the girdle of her blue coat with an air of profound meditation.

"How can I ask any girl to marry me?" Resentment flamed from the smouldering blue of Tony's eyes. "I shall always be more or less of a log. I couldn't do it. Besides, no girl would care about marrying a man who'll use crutches all his life," he ended wearily.

"I know one who would!" Peggy's voice was a whisper; her eyes were bent on her white canvas shoes.

"Peggy! You can't mean—that you love me enough—enough to marry me as I am?" Tony possessed himself of her other hand, a new, incredulous hope lighting up his handsome face to something of its old winning boyishness.

"I do!" Peggy's chin tilted proudly. "I love you all the more now because—because you want me more. Women always do, only men are so stupid. And, oh! Tony, I was so afraid you were going to be proud and—and say you wouldn't have me. And I'm awfully good at cows, and my hens always lay heaps of eggs."

She paused, flushed and breathless, as Tony drew her into his arms and kissed her softly parted lips. "What will your mother say?" she murmured into his coat sleeve.

"Here she is! We'll ask her," responded Tony promptly as Mrs. Bedford rounded the bend of the cliff.

They told her the glad tidings eagerly, and she took Peggy in her arms and kissed her. As she released the girl her eyes rested on Tony. The lines of pain and resentment had vanished from his brow; the old expectant confidence shone in his blue eyes; youth unquenchable dwelt once more on his brown, determined face.

"You've given me back my boy," she said. "God bless you for it."

Peggy was half-way down the red-flagged path . . . when a step sounded behind her. She turned . . . to see Mrs. Bedford standing hatless before her. [*Page 451, col. 2.*]

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DESERTING THE KITCHEN COLOURS.

By Maud Churton Braby.

The servant problem is always with us, and since the war has become more acute than ever, In the following article Mrs. Maud Churton Braby, the well-known author, deals with the question of our vanishing domestics, and gives some useful hints not only on how to keep servants, but also on how to do without them.

Before the food problem was the servant problem, and long after the former shall have passed away will the domestic dilemma remain. When meatless days are forgotten and sugar shortage has become a mere myth; when office boys cease to have banking accounts and these stirring times have simmered down from boiling-point into the placid grooves of peace and plenty—the servant problem will still be with us. Our grand-daughters will shed tears over it, and it will furrow the brows of our great-grandsons.

It is our permanent problem, as certain as a rainy Whitsun, as immovable as a young girl's self-righteousness. I doubt if even Lloyd George could solve it!

Just at present we are not thinking so much about it as usual, since life is looming large with the terrors of the unknown future. It seems more important to know whether grandfather will be called up as a hedger and ditcher, and what sort of figure the pater will cut with the steam plough.

Presently all these matters will be organised, all doubts cleared up, and then we shall have time to brood once more on the bitterness of our empty kitchens and the still greater tragedy of our deserted sculleries.

Oh! where are the cooks of yester-year? I believe they are all school-marms or training for the medical, or at least munition-workers. Our neat-handed Hebes are driving cars, working lifts, conducting 'buses!

Even our last stand-by, the charwoman, has forsaken us. No more shall our longing eyes be gladdened by the sight of her rusty black bonnet perched above the tightly-twisted little bun of hair, nor by that inevitable bag of ample proportions to which she was inviolately wedded, a fact that formerly was wont to arouse our basest suspicions.

Will our vanished domestics return at the end of the war? is a question that throbs ceaselessly in every housekeeper's heart. We don't ask much. We realise that times have changed. Those of us who had three maids will thankfully grasp at one, but the thought of that one we do cling to desperately, and neither economy poster nor ministerial frown will wean us from this fervent hope.

Sometimes the more thoughtful of us recall with a pang of remorse that we used actually to complain about our vanished blessings. Ah, if they would only come back and wrestle with the accursed kitchen range, how we would fall on their necks with tears of joy and kill the fatted herring for

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The daily nightmare of washing up makes even the bravest housewife yearn for the days when munition factories and motor-'buses had not deprived her of all adequate help in the kitchen.

them, or even sacrifice the sacred preserved egg! Now that we have a real first-hand experience of silver-cleaning, know that all stair-carpets are possessed of devils, and have been brought face to face with the tragedy of the children's boots in muddy weather, not to mention the fourfold nightmare of the daily washing-up—now in fact that the full bitterness of the servantless life has broken our pride and wrecked our nervous systems—how differently should we receive our former minions! Nothing would be too good for them! This, indeed, is the standard already adopted by the fortunate few who still have servants.

"The only thing to do if you have really good maids and want to keep them," said one of these lucky ladies to me recently, "is to pay them absurdly high, let them do exactly as they like, ask no questions, converse brightly with them when they seem to wish it, inquire frequently after their livers, lovers, and general well-being; speak to them with the respect of a barrister to a judge; thank them with a sweet, saintly smile for all their services, and take no notice however flagrantly they break your rules!"

This code the speaker religiously follows out, but I do not think her life is much happier than that of others; in fact, rather the contrary. She is completely at the mercy of her servants' tempers and can't call her house her own.

Many remedies have been suggested for the servant problem, and the most feasible is a general simplification of our mode of life, as in Canada, where almost every woman does her own work. This does not prevent them enjoying life; they dress well and seem to have plenty of time for social gaieties and to drive themselves about in their little runabout cars.

Those of us who have to do without servants might well take a lesson from our

Applicants for situations make many and varied demands, and one promising cook lately cancelled her engagement on learning that she could not have every week-end free to visit her soldier husband. [*Page* 456, *col.* 2.]

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Canadian sisters, who would scorn to let themselves be weighed down by household cares, as are so many Englishwomen. They are good organisers, take life more serenely, fuss less. Possibly, too, the communal spirit is more in evidence in Colonial households, and this we should also do well to copy. When servants are lacking, each member of the family should share the work, regardless of sex. It is an absurd idea that housework can only be done by women. The work of the home should be divided up between the family, with a suitable share even for the children; and at the very least everyone should clean his or her own boots and be responsible for his or her own bedroom.

To simplify dusting it is as well to put away almost all the ornaments and photographs, of which there are generally far too many. A good weeding-out of these often improves the general decorative effect considerably.

Another suggestion is that the gaps in the ranks of domestic service shall be filled by educated women. These would certainly be given a wide berth by the families who have suffered in the past from the alleged lady-help who wasn't a lady and didn't help. So far the lady servant has been the most hopeless failure of all.

With regard to breakages, it is a good plan to dwell on the pathetic side of the mishap; most servants will prove repentant if you point out how you valued the particular vase or teapot they have smashed.

Recently a friend of mine living in a West-end flat advertised in the daily papers for a temporary substitute for her treasured cook-housekeeper, who had been promised a month's holiday. No answers were received. She then repeated the advertisement with the addition of the word "Gentlewoman." Nine women wrote by return, seven 'phoned, five called before eleven o'clock in the morning, ignoring the instructions to apply first by letter. Twelve more wrote within the next day or two.

My friend interviewed about twenty of the applicants. None were ladies, none even professed to do more than quite plain cooking, although "Good cooking essential" was mentioned in the advertisement. None of them knew what a *casserole* or a *soufflé* was. None would do any washing of kitchen-cloths, etc.

Most of them talked all the time of themselves and their own requirements, giving the prospective employer no opportunity to state hers. All of them were obviously uneasy lest she should doubt their claim to aristocratic birth. In short, they were all manifestly incompetent and professing to be what they were not. To all these there was one solitary exception, and she was a Dane.

Aren't we a nation of hypocrites?

A lady living in a house of four floors in Kensington, who naturally had difficulty in keeping her servants, told me some of the requirements of the maids she had recently interviewed.

"Is there a library kept for the kitchen use?" was one question. The lady replied that there were several hundreds of books in the house which her maids were at liberty to borrow.

"I meant a library of the kind of books we should like," was the scornful reply.

Another stipulated for time for her violin practice and to attend her music lesson. Several suitable for the post of cook refused to come unless their daughters (engaged in other work outside) could be taken in as well, with presumably free board and lodging. A very promising and high-salaried cook cancelled her engagement at the last minute on hearing that she could not have every week-end free to visit her soldier husband.

Some women are constitutionally incapable of keeping their maids. Their families may be small and unexacting, their houses easy to run and replete with labour-saving appliances, their wages liberal, but, nevertheless, the stream of new faces flows in and steadily out again, and the house gets a bad name at the local registry-office.

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It is well to remember that during mealtimes the kitchen is regarded by the servants as an inviolate shrine, and any intrusion is apt to be warmly resented.

Whereas in other houses where there are basements and children and dogs and fitted carpets and scores of stairs and crowds of ornaments and late breakfasts and every possible abomination from the servants' point of view, the same staff remain peacefully rooted, year in and year out.

It may be the personal charm of the master or mistress; one or both of them may have the knack of attracting people to them, but I believe it is very largely a matter of the honeyed tongue. "I didn't like the way she spoke to me" is a reason frequently given for a change of place. Servants, as a class, are extra susceptible to the mode of address, and young mistresses would be wise to bear this in mind.

If it does not sound too ironical in view of the universal shortage, a few other hints on the vexed question of "How to Keep Servants" may be helpful. My own code could be roughly summed up as follows:

Offer more outings than is customary, since all business is competitive, and lack of liberty is the domestic's chief grievance.

Never scold. Acquire the knack of gentle remonstrance. For lesser lapses rally the defaulter semi-humorously—a most effective weapon this, if wielded properly. Never be sarcastic, as this antagonises more than anything else.

In the matter of breakages control your feelings sternly, and point out the pathetic side of the mishap—how you loved that vase, how that precious plate was the beginning of your home, or that teapot the beloved of your dear grandmother. This will work wonders in all but the blackest hearts.

Never interfere between your maids. Let your motto be "settle it between yourselves."

With regard to material comfort, be as lavish as your purse permits; a wicker chair in the kitchen, an extra looking-glass, a stone hot water-bottle, or even an eiderdown quilt—these are all inexpensive items, but they serve to bind your servants' hearts to you, and thus you are saved many a fee to the registry-office.

Study their fetishes, which mean as much to them as his caste rules to the Brahmin. Bacon for breakfast is one of these shibboleths. Kings may perish, kaisers run amok, fleets and armies be swallowed up, but unless famine be actually stalking the land—bacon for the kitchen breakfast is an imperious law of nature, unavoidable as the sunset, immutable as the stars. Another fetish is that during mealtimes the kitchen be regarded as an inviolate shrine, into which no member of the family shall enter.

Lastly, never forget that your maid is a young woman, sometimes a pretty young woman, but, whether attractive or not, invariably with the same longing for life and love, for amusement, gaiety, larks, that is the natural demand of all young people, whatever their class, colour, or creed.

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

A DIFFICULT FEAT.

One evening after drill two Irishmen each applied for a pass to go out of the barracks.

Both had to return at a certain time, so they arranged that the first one in should put a stone on the wall to let the other know he had arrived.

"Shure," said Private Brady, "if I am in first I will put a stone on the wall."

"Shure," replied Private O'Grady, "and if I am in first I will knock it off."

CERTAINLY WOODEN!

The Sergeant-Major of a certain regiment which shall be nameless, was drilling a squad of raw recruits. After twenty minutes' patient instruction he shouted out: "Squad—halt!—stand easy!"

Looking at them more in sorrow than in anger the Sergeant-Major began to talk to them.

"When I was a little nipper," he said, "my father and mother bought me a box of wooden soldiers. They were the pride and joy of my life. I loved them better than anything in the world. But one day we were moving from one house to another and my little soldiers got lost! It nearly broke my heart! I cried my eyes out! My mother patted me on the back and said: 'Never mind Johnnie, some day your little wooden soldiers will come back!'

"And deuce take it! she was right. They have!"

"Boo-oo-oo! They say my hair is like a German's!"

THE RETAIL TRADE.

If the Devil lost his tail where would he go to get a new one?

He would go to a public-house where they retail bad spirits.

ACCIDENTALLY LOST.

Two sailors were recounting their experiences in the Jutland battle.

"Our 'Jimmy the One' lost his false teeth and never missed them until he wanted to pick 'em," said one.

"Oh! that's nothing," said the other. "Our 'Lampy' got his head blown off with a 12-in. shell, and never missed it until he wanted to scratch it!"

JACK'S DIFFICULTY.

FIRST STOKER (writing home to his mother, gets into difficulties with his spelling): "Hi! mate, how d'yer spell fort?"

SECOND STOKER: "F-o-r-t."

FIRST STOKER: "No-o-o. I don't mean th' fort yer fights wiv, I means th' fort yer finks abart."

BOUND TO BE A REPORT.

A sentry whilst on guard over the powder magazine, was asked by the Orderly Officer what he would do if the Magazine were to be blown up.

"I would go up at once with the report," he said promptly.

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THE COMPELLING FACTOR

By John S. Margerison.

"I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant, nor more valiant-young,
More daring, or more bold, is now alive,
To grace this latter age with noble deeds."

I.

Crash! The German destroyer, looming suddenly out of the fog, smashed into the stem of His Britannic Majesty's submarine "L. 15." She was in a great hurry, that destroyer, for close upon her heels were three other boats, flying a different ensign, however, and eager for her blood.

Therefore, when she felt the bump, she didn't stop to see what she had hit, but blundered onwards through the fog at top speed, leaving the gallant little "L. 15" at the mercy of the cruel, ever-hungry sea. (Incidentally, it is worth while mentioning that the German destroyer never reached the port she was making for. The rent in her bows where she had struck "L. 15" so detracted from her speed that the pursuing boats were easily able to overtake her, and deal with her in effective and Navy-like fashion.)

Luckily for "L. 15", her conning-tower hatch was closed, else, when she suddenly lost her stability and sank, a broken and helpless thing, swiftly to the bottom, the sea would have rushed into her and completely cut off her gallant little crew of hard cases from all hope of escape. As it was, the steel-nerved men within her speedily realised that disaster had overtaken them, and with them realisation was the signal for action.

They had only a few minutes in which to make good their escape, for the water was slowly percolating through "L. 15's" rent and twisted bows. The blow had struck her torpedo tubes, else the water would have gushed in, and, as the ballast tanks were still empty, it was an easy matter to open a drain-cock and allow the sea to enter these receptacles.

Still, there was not a second to lose. Lieutenant James Paget, "L. 15's" commanding officer, rose to the occasion with the adaptability which made his name famous as a submarine Commander.

"Force that conning-tower hatch," he ordered. "Harvey"—this to his Sub-Lieutenant—"stand by the lever, and for heaven's sake move smartly when each man goes. I'm going to flood the boat with compressed air and trust to it keeping the water back. Each man will take his turn, starting with the married ones, and will be shot up through the conning-tower hatch to the surface."

He grabbed the nearest at hand, an elderly artificer.

"When I rap on your fingers," he said, "let go, and you'll shoot to the surface. When you get there try to find something that floats. If you can't—well, Germany's only eight miles to the southward, if you can see the stars through the fog, and your wife will still get her allowance while you're a prisoner. Stand by!"

Hastily dragging a life-saving helmet over his head, Paget stationed him on the ladder.

He signalled to Harvey, and the door slid back. His fist dropped on the artificer's knuckles, and that worthy let go his hold of the ladder. Propelled upwards by the pressure of the compressed air within the boat he shot, like a stone from a boy's hand, straight to the surface.

Again and again the operation was repeated, and at last only the Sub-Lieutenant and Jimmy were left.

"Thank God I've got the dear lads out," said the latter, wiping the perspiration from

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his forehead. "Now you've got to go, and then I'll have a try for myself. I don't see dying down here like a rat in a trap if I can help it, and if ever I do get out, heaven help the Germans I meet; they'll need help from somewhere. Are you ready?"

Harvey shook his head.

"No, I'm not," he replied, "and, what's more, I'm not likely to be until you've gone. I'm going to shoot you upwards first, and follow myself, if there's a chance. The Navy can spare me better than it can spare you. Lord knows there aren't too many submarine Commanders like you knocking about, and the rarity of the species makes it more precious."

He broke off and looked at the dark water swirling around his knees. Paget, however, paid no heed to the sea; his eyes were fixed on those of his subordinate officer.

"Look here, old man," he began, almost pleadingly, "I don't want to come the 'superior officer' stunt over you now. It might be the last time we shall ever see each other—though not if I can prevent it—and surely you'll realise that it's my duty to leave this old tin hooker last of all now she's done in? Get ready to go. I'm wasting time talking to you, and I may need it soon."

Again Harvey shook his head.

"Nothing doing," he said quietly. "After you!"

Paget almost cried.

"There's just enough air pressure in this boat to send one of us to the top," he said at last. "And when that one's gone the other will have to stay behind. Surely you don't want to stop down here with certain death staring you in the face all the time?"

"I can't say that I'm exactly looking for such a situation, sir," replied Harvey, "but, at the same time, I don't see why you should do it instead of me. I've given you my reasons—and I'm staying."

"Sub-Lieutenant Harvey," said James solemnly, "you are my subordinate officer. While this ship sticks together I'm her Commander, and I now order you to prepare to leave her. You're sacked, dismissed the ship, and——" he broke off with a merry laugh—"if you don't do as I tell you without a fuss I shall hit you between the eyes and under the jaw and blow you to the surface insensible with the best pair of coloured optics you've ever had. Harvey, for the love of heaven don't make my chances of escape any the less."

Harvey was touched by his superior's pleading.

"Very well," he said, "I'll go on one condition."

"And that is?" asked Paget.

"That you swear you'll do your level best to get out, sir, after I've gone," answered the Sub. "Truth is"—he wiped an involuntary tear with the back of his hand—"I'd love—I'd love to serve with you again."

Again Jimmy laughed.

"Why, you dear old fathead," he cried, "did you think I was going to sit down and weep after you'd gone? Not me! Not while there's a kick in this body of mine shall I give in, and I'll bet you a dinner in town that before long I'm serving again, even if I have to be harassed by you as my second. Shake, lad, and good-bye!"

The two men looked into each other's fearless eyes as their hands met. Then Harvey swallowed a lump, stepped to the ladder, and nodded. James stationed himself by the door lever.

"I shan't be able to slap your hand, lad," he said. "But you can count twenty, and then let go."

The door slid back, and Harvey, propelled—much more slowly than the artificer—by the compressed air, shot upwards. Paget slammed the door to with a will, jammed it hard home, and looked around for a helmet. He could not find one—somehow or other the boat must have been one short of her complement—and at length, determined to risk the passage unprotected, returned to the conning-tower. He seized the lever, intending to open the door and shoot outwards as his crew had done. The sea, he knew, would fill the boat, but that would happen in any case sooner or later, and perhaps some day he would get another one. He tried to open the hatch, but, although he swung off on the lever with all his might, the door refused to budge.

"Lord!" he said, "I'm caught this time, and no mistake. But I'm not giving in yet. There must be some way out."

He tried the lever again, and even went round all the compressed air flasks in the boat to see if one had been overlooked. If there remained but a hundred pounds of pressure in one it would be sufficient to work the door-opening mechanism and to make the now useless lever a vital piece of steel indeed.

But his luck was out; every flask was drained empty. And all the time the water rose inch by inch, slowly but surely, until it was round his waist. He sat down on the periscope stool to think of a way out.

"There's forty feet of water pressing against that door," he ruminated, "and against that the strength of one man is a fleabite. I might just as well try to push the boat's side outwards as shift that. It doesn't appear as though I could do anything. Never

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mind! There are worse tombs on shore than the hull of a British submarine, though I can't say that I quite relish the idea of coiling up my ropes and paying off this commission as yet. There are too many exciting things on top, what with Hun-strafing, and besides, I've an appointment on the twelfth, when I start that week's leave I've so hardly earned. It's too bad to be caught like this, just when life's beginning to be worth living."

He gazed around the boat, and it was characteristic of the man that he did not lose heart at the prospect. The sea still trickled through the damaged hull forward, and he could see the motors aft, now only halfway out of water. The rear door of the tube, the electric oven, and most of the deck fittings were completely under water, and the clock-dial gauges on the row of shining compressed air flasks seemed to be mocking his impotence.

"Here am I," went on James aloud, "boxed up in the old tin-can, with just sufficient air to last me a certain length of time. By and bye it will become so exhausted that I shan't be able to breathe. At the rate the water is coming in the air will never get so compressed as to hurt me, but it'll take hours before I'm finished off."

He rose and moved around, the water swishing at every step.

"Crumbs!" he went on. "But I never thought to die like this. I suppose it's all in the day's work, though, but I'd prefer a clean death, with the old hooker shoving out torpedoes at the enemy, or even fighting some destroyer or other. There would be some satisfaction in that—but this gives me the creeps. Ugh!"

He stopped and gazed upwards at the hatch.

"Now, if I could only manage to raise that hatch," he said, "I'd be O.K. But the sea's too heavy for me, unless I can find something to equalise the pressure. Compressed air would do the trick. Ah! Compressed air. Let me see!"

With the new-born idea slowly formulating itself in his head, he sat down once more. Slowly but surely he worked it out, and when he had completed his plan he checked the points off on his fingers, while the water swirled around his waist.

"First thing," he calculated, "if I can compress the air remaining in the boat sufficiently to equalise the pressure of water outside, I can move the door with the hand gear. Next thing, the pressure of air would be enough to boost me up to the top, where I'd have to take my chance of being picked up. Third thing, if I let the water into the boat through the seacocks she'll fill at an alarming rate, and there's a chance that I'll be drowned before the air gets sufficiently strong. Better to be drowned than stop here to be suffocated. I've always heard it's a pleasant death, though I don't know anybody who's been through it. Anyway, that's the only thing to do. I'll try it."

Upon this resolution he bent down and groped in the water for the seacock valves. He found them, and pulled them over steadily. The water rushed into the already-full ballast tanks and surged into the submarine. Paget watched it rise, and then, like a man walking to his execution, calmly placed himself under the hatch. And as he waited he thought—thought hard of those who loved him and whom he loved—of the mother and sisters in dear old England, and of that other girl of whom he was more than half afraid. And his thoughts, at first, were happy thoughts.

Then the rapidly-compressing air began to hurt his lungs as he breathed, began to stab inside him as with ten thousand needles. Noises came to his head; at one moment he could hear the thrashing of a steamer's screw as she chugged her way along; then it softened and tailed away into the singing of an angelic choir, to be replaced a second later by the hooting of a score of sirens from fogbound ships.

"Come, Jimmy, old man," he told himself, "you mustn't get loopy now, or you'll be fish-food for a certainty. Pull yourself together, man, and wait a minute."

He shook his head to clear his brain, and discovered that the water was now up to his chin. Mechanically he climbed to the first rung of the ladder, then to the next as the water reached his face again. Now he had to cling to the ladder with what remained of his senses, and he pressed on the door lever with all his weight.

There were only about six inches of space between his head and the conning-tower hatch, and this tiny space was momentarily decreasing as the water poured in. The air in it, too, was becoming more and more compressed, and once James thought the lever gave slightly under the weight of his body. He pushed hard, madly, exerting every ounce of strength which remained to him, and the lever snapped off short like a rotten carrot. Unnoticed, his earlier efforts had cracked the steel, and now the last ounce had smashed it.

The sudden swirl of waters about his head as he fell with the lever brought back his reeling senses. He grabbed wildly, and his hand met the side of the steel ladder. With a muttered prayer—he did not know he was

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praying—he regained his position on the rungs and gazed angrily at the blank square of the hatch overhead.

"If you possessed one spark of feeling you'd fly open now that the air pressure is so intolerable and, let me out," he cried.

He rained ineffectual blows on the steel door, but, as is the nature of such things, it gave not one inch. He was almost insane now, for some Titan was hammering away at his brain with a mighty steam hammer. He didn't know it was the beating of his own labouring heart, any more than he knew the ten thousand devils trying to set his chest on fire were only his lungs breathing compressed air.

He braced himself on the rungs of the ladder, just as dark insensibility was falling upon him, and thrust upwards with both hands. The disturbed water lapped his ears and eyes, and he had to tilt his chin to breathe. The strength he exerted—the strength of madness—was the final ounce in the balance. The door swung open easily under his thrust, and before he himself knew it he was shooting to the surface in the centre of a vast air bubble, which burst, to leave him, a senseless log, floating on the face of the waters.

* * * * *

The commanding officer of His Majesty's Torpedo Boat "036" was growing impatient. When he had suddenly sighted a black body shooting out of the water two hours before, he had at once, as in duty bound, stopped to investigate the matter. When the black body had turned out to be an artificer from the crew of submarine "L. 15," a gentleman who gasped out an incoherent story of "messmates coming up from the wreck," he had thought the man mad.

Then nineteen other bodies, rising in quick succession, followed after a little while by that of Sub-Lieutenant Harvey, had confirmed his story. The destroyer's Commander, fancying that Harvey was "L. 15's" Captain, was about to get under weigh, when the artificer touched him on the sleeve.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said. "But our skipper ain't come up yet, sir."

The destroyer officer had interrogated Harvey, and much against his will—for he was on a special mission whose prime factor was speed—had agreed to wait till Paget should put in an appearance. Slowly circling, so as not to lose the spot of sea above the stricken submarine, "036" had waited, her officers and crew and the rescued men never allowing their eyes to leave the surface.

Minutes lengthened into an hour, and the hour wore on to two, and still no Paget had appeared. The destroyer Captain turned to Harvey.

"I'm sorry to be a Job's comforter," he said, "but I'm afraid your Old Man has kept his last trick. He must be drowned by this time, or he'd have come up, and I suppose your—your"—he bit back the words "tin-kettle"—"your ship will have to be his hammock. Anyway, if you like, I'll read a couple of prayers out of the Burial Service over him, and we'll get on."

Now, the destroyer officer was very much Harvey's senior, and, of course, his word was law. He had done all that was humanly possible for "L. 15's" company, and naturally he considered that he was only wasting time waiting for a skipper who tarried so long. He knew, as all naval officers do, the theory of a submarine's interior, and he could not see how Paget was going to get out at all. You see, he had never had the benefit of Paget's acquaintance, or he would have known that James did not give in until about beaten to death. Had he known this, Harvey's words would have carried more weight.

"Of course, you're the boss here," said the latter, "and you'll do as you like. You've been an awful brick standing by these two hours—or years—and I know your time is exceedingly valuable. But if you'll give me a Berthon boat and a cask of water, with a drop of rum and a few biscuits, I'll relieve you of the job of looking for Paget to come up. He'll do so—I know he will, for he gave me his word."

The Sub's simple faith touched the other's heart.

"Well," he said at length, "I'll stay here exactly one more hour, and that ought to satisfy even you. If he doesn't come up then you can have your Berthon—and as soon as I've delivered my dispatches I'll come back and pick you up."

He had scarcely made the promise ere one of "L. 15's" crew gave a shout and pointed. There, twenty yards from his outstretched finger, was a swirling of waters. Then, quicker than it can be told, there rose a gigantic air bubble, and in the middle an inert, motionless body.

Harvey, on the second, flung himself overside and swam towards the floating body, followed a second later by the torpedo boat's whaler. They picked up Paget and his second in command, and while the latter performed artificial respiration and all the other remedies for the apparently drowned that he had ever heard of, "036" turned her nose towards home, and sliced through the water at her top speed.

Night came and went, and dawn broke

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He bent down and groped in the water for the seacock valves. He found them, and pulled them over steadily. The water rushed into the already-full ballast tanks and surged into the submarine. [*Page 461, col. 2.*]

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ere Paget made an appearance on the upper deck, clad in a suit borrowed from "036's" Commander.

"Thanks for standing by, old man," he said simply to the latter gentleman. "I'd have done the same for you, only I hope I shall never have to."

They laughed—the clear ringing laugh of men who continually look Death in the eye without flinching, and the grip of Paget's hand conveyed more thanks than his tongue could ever hope to frame.

"By the way," said "036's" Commander, "that's a good lad you've got for a Sub. If it hadn't been for his incessant worrying I'm afraid I should have steamed off and left you long before you came up. You've got a jewel there, and I only wish I could get one like him."

Paget looked out ahead over the brightening waters ere he replied. Then he gulped hard, and surreptitiously wiped an eye with the back of his hand.

"Yes," he agreed. "He's one of the best. I wouldn't part with him for the best Post-Captain that ever sewed lace on a sleeve."

And then and there, in the grey light, he told "036's" Commander of the agreement before Harvey left the wreck, of the struggle he—Jimmy—had had with the waters and the air and the hatch, and when he drew to a close both men were overwrought with emotion, and dared not trust themselves to speak. Paget recovered first.

"And do you know," said Paget, "when Harvey told me he had worried you into staying he said he had a reason, I tried to make him tell me what the reason was, and at last, more to get rid of my questions than anything else, he told me. D'ye know what he said?"

"036's" Commander shook his head.

"Well," went on Jimmy, "he said that as I'd lost five bob to him at ecarté, and as it was the first time he had ever won, he didn't want me to go out till I'd paid him."

And amid Lieutenant James Paget's laughter great salt tears coursed down his cheeks, and splashed to the destroyer's deck, while his brother officer stared hard at a compass card, and cursed heartily under his breath.

TO FLEURETTE.

Do you remember still, Fleurette,
Our roseleaf kisses days ago?
Your star-dust eyes compel me yet;
They tempted, and I held you—so.
I watched your colour come and go;
The music sighed; the scene was set,
How many thousand? Do you know,
Or can't you bear to count, Fleurette?

Oh, my Fleurette, you will not see
Soft nights of golden-hued July
Have no such scent as wafts to me
Your scented hair when you go by;
And though a myriad roses die
And all their inmost sweet express,
They breathe not with their passing sigh
The fragrance of a single tress!

Most precious Aphrodite, still,
Amid life's aimless froth and whirl,
Grant me the circumstance, the will,
The subtle moment, and the girl!
String me a necklace, pearl on pearl,
Clouded with just one faint regret,
To twine amid a captive curl
That gilds the throat of dear Fleurette.

François.

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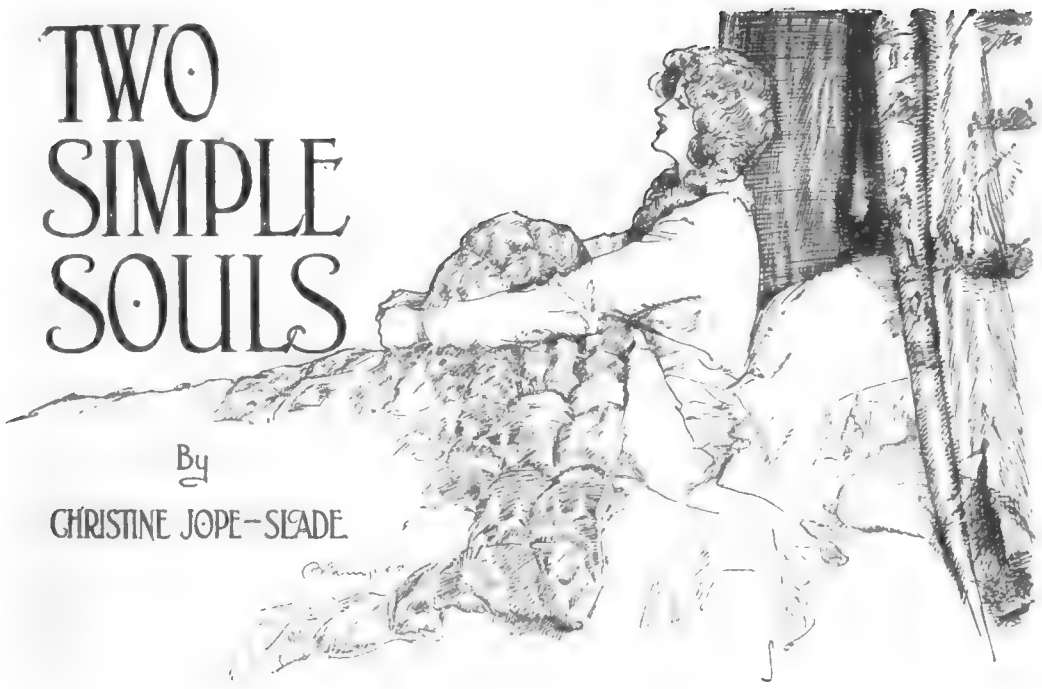
TWO SIMPLE SOULS



By

CHRISTINE JOPE-SLADE

"Things are seldom what they seem;
Skim milk masquerades as cream."

I.

NANETTE, whose real name was just Ann, awoke and surveyed the cleanest, quaintest pink eiderdown ever cold-creamed, carefully-massaged limbs snuggled under. Sleep drifted away from her eyes and left them clear and thoughtful to take in the vision of dimity curtains and a chair heaped with shell-pink Georgette lingerie and a billowy nigger silk underskirt, a dressing-table frilled with spotted muslin over pink sateen and bearing silver-backed brushes, silver-topped pots, manicure implements, bleaching fluids, face creams, bath salts, and salves.

"No," said Nanette, "it isn't in key—and neither am I!"

"I've filled the tub with hot water for ye, Miss, dearie," said a high, pleasant, sing-song voice outside the door. "I've put the tub in the little room—I thought your own was ower-small to what you're 'customed to."

"Thanks so much," the girl called back. She climbed out of the little four-poster bed with the dimity hangings and slid into high-heeled, rose boudoir slippers with big pink roses as rosettes; then she surveyed her small, white feet with vague displeasure. She hated to be "out of the picture," and it was quite crudely out of the picture to use them just to trot into the wee room where the large iron washing-basin filled with hot rain-water awaited her; she kicked them off and went barefoot.

"Miss," said the pleasant, sing-song country voice excitedly as she entered the red-tiled kitchen half-an-hour later, "Miss, I've great news this morn—Master Colin's coming home, and he's coming here!"

"Oh, Saucebox!" Nanette laughed teasingly. "Did he call you Saucebox in his letter?"

"What else should he be calling me—his own old Nannie? He'll be glad to get out of khaki and into his old tweeds—but, my dear, you're not eating your breakfast." The good old soul paused and surveyed her pretty boarder anxiously.

"No," said Nanette. "I—I'm rather fed up."

"You can't be, my dear. Why, last night you only had a morsel of——"

"You lamb!" interrupted the girl swiftly. "I wish I wrote plays, I'd pop you in one—

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. Saucebox !" Nanette laughed teasingly. "Did he call you Saucebox in his letter?"
"What else should he be calling me—his own old Nannie?" [Page 465, col. 2.]

just as you are. Saucebox, don't you want me to go now Master Colin is coming?"

"No, honey, I don't." The old woman looked at her in wrinkled perplexity. "Master Colin knows I take in boarders."

"But can't you see I—I sort of spoil the atmosphere? I don't fit in with the place, or the cottage, or you—or anything. Do I look right? I ask you!" She presented herself for inspection, standing against the huge, old kitchen range in a *negligée* of Chinese blue silk, her mop of curly hair, tawny gold in the sunshine, and the Chinese blue paying compliments to her mischievous eyes.

"Perhaps you're ower-stylish for Moorfrinton," the little old woman admitted unwillingly.

"I look vulgar, Saucebox—and I feel vulgar, so vulgar I could cry! I don't look like it in town, but I do down here! I feel out of it every minute; I feel wrong. Master Colin is coming home to steep himself in the peace and quiet of the country, and he won't appreciate a little London actress——"

"Now, now! The doctor said you weren't to go back to work for another month!"

"I know—but I don't want to jar on a man from the trenches whose nerves demand certain things."

"Master Colin's a perfect gentleman."

"Yes, and a country squire who rides to hounds and loves dogs and cows, and porridge for breakfast; who hasn't yet learnt to Boston or reverse because he hasn't found it necessary; who has a cold tub every morning; who despises cocktails and dishes with French names; who hasn't stayed in bed to breakfast since he had measles."

"Chicken-pox."

"Chicken-pox, then — who thinks Londoners are awful washouts——"

"Washouts?"

"I," Nanette explained, dimpling, "am, as far as Master Colin is concerned, a complete washout,"

"I'm sure I hope so, my dear, but I don't quite understand. Master Colin may have altered—it's more than five years since I saw him, and he's lived in London since his father died and the manse was sold."

"But he loves and understands the country, Saucebox. He's a type of young English country squire—and it's a great type; it's big and true and honest and loyal and sporting and gentle and kind and—dull!"

"No one could call Master Colin dull. He can sing——"

"Yes, 'John Peel' and 'The Diver' and 'Lighterman Tom' and——"

"Well—he do sing those a good bit."

"I know he does. Saucebox, you don't understand, but he's coming down to you for peace and quiet and simple food and long country walks and sleepy evenings with a pipe and *Punch* beside the fire, and I shall be a poisonous irritant."

"Master Colin——" began the nurse firmly.

"Master Colin likes to see just where a dress fastens, he understands low-heeled

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shoes with straps across, his idea of an evening dress is something blue or pink or black with a lace tucker. He hates unusualness. He likes a girl to be simple and girlish and wear sensible stockings. I shall spoil everything for him! I know I shall. He'd as soon take his meals with a cockatoo as sit opposite me in my little jade jumper or that electric blue chiffon velvet. I'll upset the whole atmosphere."

"When his mother died I had her wardrobe," said the old nurse thoughtfully. "She was a very quiet lady. Somehow I never liked to—— They're all packed away in camphor just as they were. She was about your size, Miss—such a pretty little thing."

"Was it long ago, Saucebox?"

"Nearly twenty years. Master Colin was only ten. Maybe if you could alter some of those things——"

"Saucebox, what a brain! He needn't know I'm a London actress. I can just be a quiet, simple little country girl who won't worry him or set him on edge."

"The things are in that oak chest in your room, Miss Amery."

"Call me Miss Ann, Saucebox. Nanette Amery doesn't quite fit in with the picture."

But the old woman called her "my little honey" when she went upstairs and found her, surrounded by sprigged muslins and mauve silks and brown and grey brocades and myrtle poplins, crying like a distressed child.

"I'm making a perfect idiot of myself because just for a minute I wished I was really and truly the sort of girl who would have chosen these things to wear. You know it's horrid to—to have the sort of mind that studies hair and complexion instinctively even when you're only buying a hair-slide or a new collar."

"Perhaps you'll settle down in the country."

"Never! I don't always want to be tearing round or spending money, but I love London. I love the shops, the life, the crowds, the noise. I'm not one bit a country mouse."

II.

"This is Master Colin, Miss Ann. Miss Amery, Mr. Whitting."

Ann, in a white muslin sprigged with forget-me-nots, a demure blue ribbon round her waist, looking as if she had left her poke bonnet in the porch outside, bowed to the brown-faced man by the fire.

He thought her very fair and sweet standing there in the candle light, a shy little country miss in a little country dressmaker's frock—and he wondered what she'd look like in a Doucet model.

He thought her very fair and sweet standing there in the candle light, a shy little country miss in a little country dressmaker's frock—and he wondered what she'd look like in a Doucet model.

Later, seated in the red firelight, she sang to them, at the old woman's insistent request.

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She had a voice high and sweet and clear as a robin's. It was about ten times the volume she betrayed as she sang "Oh, that We Two were Maying" and "Kathleen Mavourneen."

"You have a beautiful voice," he said, when she had blushingly declined to sing any more. "I expect you used to sing in the choir?"

And she, who was going back to town to receive £15 a week for singing "The Roses Have Made Me Remember," as a princess in a fairy play, humbly denied the soft impeachment.

He treated her like a shy bird, treading delicately and watching every step he took. He wondered what she would be like if something happened to bring her out, and he longed to do it, to show her things, and teach her things, and give her something to talk about and feed her personality on. He felt she was like a beautiful, intelligent child, who had never been allowed to read and write. So he talked to his old nurse of the trenches, of the crops, of Farmer Burrows' shaggy Highland cattle newly imported and a novelty to the locality, of jam making and the difficulty in getting sufficient sugar, and the shortage of farm labour—and Nanette slipped away at ten.

"And think," she said to the pale, pyjamaed vision of herself in the tiny mirror, "think of a year of evenings spent with talks like tonight!"

Within a week she was taking quite a justifiable professional pride in her performance of a simple country miss. It was a credit to her, but conversation did not go with a zest owing to the unfamiliar ground they trod; it needed careful watching, for it was full of pitfalls for the unwary.

"It's like being with your maiden aunt," said Nanette to herself. "The maiden aunt who just comes to town once a year and stays with relatives in the suburbs, and goes to see George Alexander or H. B. Irving. I feel so horribly petty because I can only talk of people and places. I wonder what he'd look like in evening dress?"

"You keep coming up against bunkers with a girl like that," thought her constant escort. "And yet I like talking to her better than anyone else—and she's simply great to look at!"

She rejoiced with smiles downstairs, and cars upstairs when the news came that the War Office would not discharge Captain Colin Whitting; although physically unfit for further active service, they were prepared to present him ... a few red tabs and a staff job at home.

She was most unreasonably glad.

Country life palled terribly, and the doctor's permission to return to town had to be given, rehearsals were almost due, but she was extraordinarily loath to tear herself away.

As for Captain Whitting, he spent a lot of time at the post-office telephone explaining to a pal who wanted him to join a party at the Savoy what an enormous amount of good the simple life was doing him.

Then Captain Colin Whitting had to trot up to town to Savile Row to get correctly "red tabbed" and "tin hatted," and Miss Nanette Amery, who was due to try rose petal creations on in the studio of one of the biggest theatrical dress designers of the day, departed also discreetly by the next train—intending to return by the train before his, for the little lady had been sorely puzzled; travel to town in the late Mrs. Whitting's intensely ladylike attire she could not, and buzz up in her own glad rags she would not.

She had looked forward to town—and town bored her to tears.

She lunched with a party of friends at the Carlton, and could have cried with *ennui*.

He had looked forward to town—and he was fed up with it in an hour.

He lunched at the Savoy with some kindred spirits, and grew blasphemous with boredom.

He returned to Moorfrinton by an early afternoon train, and met Saucebox in the grocer's, and she told him Miss Ann was out.

That settled his mind for him. He went home, took various drawing implements from his *attaché* case, spread them all over the kitchen table, and set to work.

"She'll have to know, because a wife must know her husband's profession—and she's going to be my wife. She'll be very pained, and consider me fearfully feminine, and it will hurt her like the devil," he thought. "I shall have to educate her to the idea, and I shan't like it."

Then he looked at the diamond-paned window and saw a Paris model with Nanette inside it—the effect was enchanting—coming up the path. It was neither green nor grey, and, of course, the one shade she alone could wear, finished at the throat with a chinchilla collar.

He stepped behind the curtain and watched her come in, singing.

"Saucebox ('If You Were the Only Girl in the World'), Saucebox, where are you, and have I time to change? ('There would be such wonderful things to do.')"

She'd reached the table by this time, and she sang no more. He only heard little "Oh's!" and "Ah's" of intense appreciation.

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The Torpedo Fish is armed with an electric organ, a shock from which will disable even the most formidable foe, just as a torpedo fired from a submarine will destroy the biggest battleship afloat.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

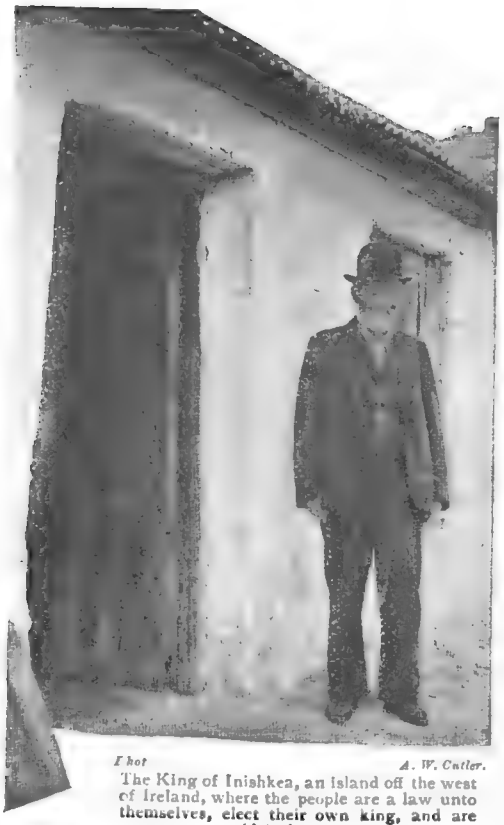

Photo A. W. Cutler.

The King of Inishkea, an island off the west of Ireland, where the people are a law unto themselves, elect their own king, and are said to be pagans.

THE KING OF INISHKEA.

SITUATED off the west coast of Ireland there are some remote islands where the inhabitants are a law unto themselves.

These independent and much-to-be-envied folks refuse to pay taxes of any sort whatsoever; indeed, they decline to subject themselves to any rule but that of their own "king," a monarch they themselves elect.

This is the King of Inishkea, an island some way distant from Achill Island. It is said that the people who dwell on Inishkea are pagans, at one time making a god of a masthead which is believed to have drifted ashore at the time of the Armada.

They do not seem to be very faithful in their allegiance to their idols, however, for rumour has it that they now worship a rock!

THE CROOKED INN.

KINGSWINFORD, in Staffordshire, boasts an inn which is noted for its somewhat rakish appearance. This house, which is unofficially known as "The Crooked Inn," has a very decided sag, and has to be propped up at one side by a substantial brick buttress.

The inn has been in this position for some fifty years or so now, the sag being caused by excavations in a coal mine beneath the house. However, this little eccentricity has its advantages, for it is the means of attracting many visitors.

Photo A. W. Cutler.

Excavations in a coal-mine beneath this inn, in Staffordshire, have caused it to sag, so that it has had to be propped up by the brick buttress on the right. It has been appropriately christened "The Crooked Inn."

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NIAGARA'S AERIAL RAILWAY.

THE Niagara Whirlpool may now be crossed by means of an aerial railway which has recently been completed. The car runs by electricity on six suspended cables, and has accommodation for forty-five passengers. Seven or eight minutes is the time taken to cross, and the novelty of crossing Niagara at its most dangerous point is expected to attract many passengers.

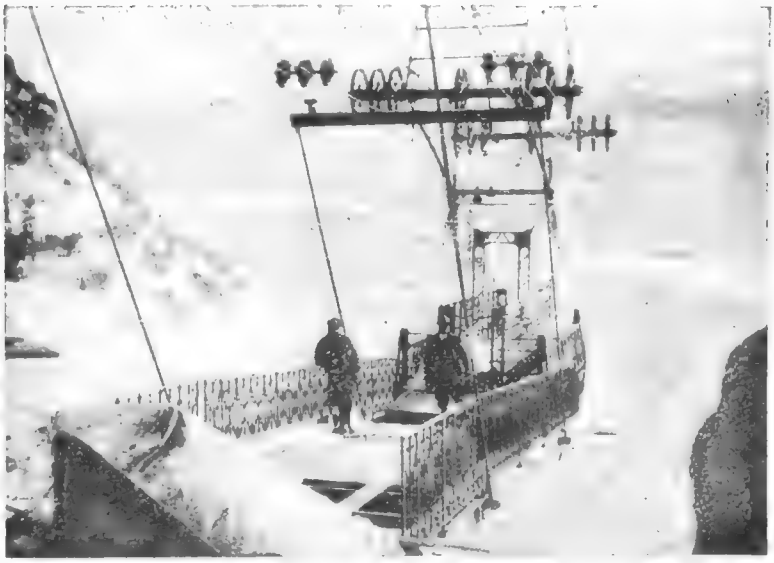

Photo *H. J. Shepstone.*

An aerial railway recently thrown across the Niagara Whirlpool. The car runs by electricity on six suspended cables, and accommodates forty-five passengers.

"TWINS!"

THE domestic egg is such a scarce commodity nowadays that one would expect a fowl that would lay eggs in pairs to be regarded as a valuable possession. Poultry keepers, however, do not look with favour on these freak eggs, for they indicate defective working of the hen's internal machinery.

The examples shown were of normal size, with a covering shell of extreme thinness, the connecting link being in the form of a flexible tube of remarkably tough texture.

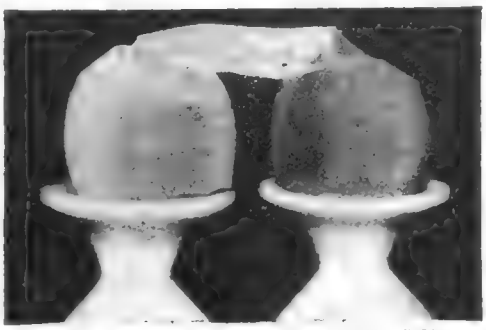

Photo *F. Riley.*

These eggs, when laid, were found to be joined together by a flexible tube of remarkably tough texture, and to possess shells of extreme thinness.]

SEEING THE ALPS BY TELESCOPE.

WHAT is claimed to be the highest telescope in the world may be seen at Eismeer Station, on the Jungfrau Railway, in Switzerland. It stands 10,000 feet above sea-level and is very powerful, being specially designed to enable one to view the wonderful scenery all around. The instrument produces a beautiful, stereoscopic effect, and everything appears to be but a few yards away.

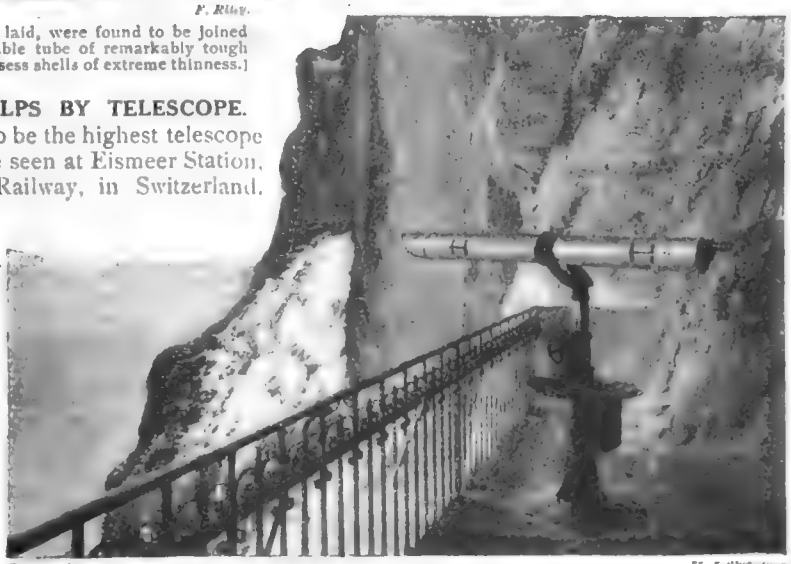

Photo *H. J. Shepstone.*

Eismeer Station, on the Jungfrau Railway, in Switzerland, claims to have the highest telescope in the world. It is 10,000 feet above sea-level, and was specially designed for viewing the wonderful scenery all around.

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The Odd Pearls

By Gladys L. Gunn.

"Oh, Love! thou bane of the most generous souls!
Thou doubtful pleasure, and thou certain pain."

I.

"There's a bargain for you, my son," said the Doctor, subsiding heavily into a big cane chair in Mallinson's verandah and mixing himself a drink.

"I'll be making a fortune one of these days—some pearls, what?"

He threw a small packet wrapped in native paper on to the table as he spoke.

Mallinson opened it, and held up to the lamp a handful of iridescent beads.

"Who's let you in for this, Doc?" he chuckled, after a moment's scrutiny—"that old scoundrel at the corner of Triplicane Bazaar, I'll be bound! I thought as much. Well, he's the chap who's got the bargain this time. These are no more pearls than potatoes—worth a couple of rupees at the most!"

"What!" growled the Doctor, fingering his purchase dubiously. "Why, I gave the old devil fifty rupees for that little lot—swore to me they were loot from some temple—much as his life was worth to part with them. You bet your boots he'll have a sore head by this time to-morrow," he finished, stuffing the beads back into his pocket. "Well, I must be off. Boy! Telling *serang* getting launch ready."

Mallinson slowly hitched his legs higher on to the long rests of his chair, and flicked off a mosquito that had settled itself for a square meal on his wrist.

"Don't go, Doc," he said, half sheepishly. "Stay and dine; I can give you a shake-down. I feel rotten . . . it's a year ago to-night that Calthorpe died here, you know, and that and malaria have fairly got me down between them. Talking of pearls, I can show you some—genuine article this time," he added, with a sly glance at the Doctor. "They've a queer history."

He got out of his chair and sauntered into the bungalow, returning presently with a dispatch-box, which he placed on the table beside him and opened with a key from his watch-chain.

"Look!" he said abruptly. "Not so bad, are they, eh?"

For a moment the Doctor stared, too startled to speak. "Great Scott, man!" he gasped at last. "Where in the name of fortune did you get hold of them? Why, they must be worth thousands of rupees!"

Mallinson made no reply.

With shaking fingers he slowly lifted out two long ropes of shimmering pearls, each bead perfect in itself, and separated by a tiny knot of ivory silk, and laid them on the table.

"Count them," he muttered in an odd, strained voice. "Count carefully and tell me how many there are on each string."

A long silence fell between the two men, broken only by the restless throb of a distant tom-tom in the bazaars on the farther shore, where myriads of tiny lights twinkled softly through the mists like coloured jewels.

The dank reek of the decaying cocoanut shells from the great backwater in front of the bungalow crept into the verandah, mingling with the sickly-sweet odour of the waxy flowers of the frangipani trees in the strip of garden near the water's edge. A fitful breeze, rising with the incoming tide, sighed among the broad fronds of the palms with which the

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bungalow was surrounded, rustling like the soft frou-frou of some unseen woman's dress.

Mallinson shivered, and looked impatiently across at his companion.

"Ninety-eight . . . ninety-nine . . . one hundred."

The Doctor counted slowly, and turned the pearls over in his hands.

"The strings are uneven," he said. "There are only ninety-eight on that one, and a hundred on this."

"Ah!" cried Mallinson, and drained his cocktail at a gulp. "The two odd tricks—curse them! Curse them!" he shouted suddenly, crashing his fist on the table.

With a wrench he pulled himself together, and went on quietly. "You shall hear the tale, Doc—I want to tell you to-night, old chap; I have a queer idea that—— Ah!—well, no matter—Calthorpe is dead, and I am off home, out of this vile hole by to-morrow's mail train for Bombay."

"Calthorpe?" said the Doctor. "Wasn't he the chap who went under last hot weather? Cholera, eh?"

Mallinson nodded, staring out over the oily black waters.

"Cholera—and—and—something else. We chummed here together, you know, in this very bungalow, for five years. Five years in this foul climate, and never a harsh word or thought between us till that copper-haired Jezebel came, and then—curse all women!"

"Oh, come, I say!" grinned the Doctor. "Bit hard on the fair sex, aren't you?"

"Wait till you hear," answered Mallinson grimly. "Calthorpe and I had been pals for years. We came out from home in the same boat to old man Johnson's coir factory; we lived in the same bungalow, and shared a small motor launch that we bought with our first year's savings. We used to slip over to the club on the mainland in it in the evenings when work was done."

He paused for a moment to mix another cocktail.

"Doc, you know the kind of women one meets down these parts—sickly, anæmic creatures, bleached with the heat, and every ounce of energy drained out of them. Look at Padre Santon's girl——"

The Doctor nodded.

"Then imagine to yourself our feelings one evening when we strolled into the club, and came suddenly face to face with such an exquisitely beautiful girl that we simply stood spellbound, staring and speechless.

"She was leaning against that old fretted marble gateway, in some sort of flame-coloured dress that clung softly round her. Her lips were parted in a smile; her cheeks were flushed with radiant health, and dimples—Gad! you never saw such dimples. . . .

"The sun was setting over the backwater, and the golden light filtering through the gateway quivered about her head like a halo. It was her wonderful hair that struck me most, for it was copper-coloured—brilliant copper and gold—and wound about her head in great rolls and plaits.

"Young Talbot of the Police was talking to her, and as soon as he caught sight of us he called out:

"'Come on, you chaps, and be introduced to our latest arrival from the Old Country—Miss Rani Hersey.'

"We went, and I heard Calthorpe give a queer little gulp as he took her hand.

"She came with us for a run down the backwater, later on, for a breath of fresh air in the launch, but Calthorpe was strangely silent the whole time, and it was not till we had finished our last peg in the verandah before turning in that he suddenly leant over and tapped me on the knee.

"'I'm going to marry that girl. Do you hear?' said he. 'I'll marry her if I have to sell my soul to do it.'

"I laughed.

"'Are you?' I said. 'We'll see about that—for I mean to marry her myself.' She had fairly bewitched us both, Doc.

"'However,' I added, 'we have about as much chance as that tarantula spider on the wall above your head. Old man Hersey, who owns half the land from here to Cochin, isn't exactly the sort of chap to let his only daughter—and heiress—throw herself away on a miserable assistant in a coir factory.'

"'Assistant be hanged!' said Calthorpe, and, pushing back his chair, walked off to his own quarters without another word.

"And that was the beginning of it, Doc.

"For a while things went on in the old way, but gradually we began to drift apart. Luck all seemed to be in the way of Calthorpe, for soon after I went down with a stiff bout of fever, and had to lie low for a couple of months.

"Then, one evening, there was some sort of native *fête* on the islands, and I persuaded the Hersey girl to come in the launch with me to see the illuminations, and on the way back I asked her to marry me.

"She laughed, and pinched a tiny monkey she always carried about with her till it gibbered with rage.

"'Gracious! How funny! Even Tino laughs!' said she. 'For do you know? your friend Algy Calthorpe asked me the very same question only a couple of hours ago, and for the life of me I don't know which of you I like the best. But—I have a brillian:

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idea—I told Algy, and I'll tell you, too. I adore pearls. I will dine with you both on my birthday, and whoever brings me the longest string of pearls I'll marry—and there's my seal on the bargain!' And, suddenly leaning forward, she kissed me full on the lips.

"Doc! before twenty-four hours had passed I had bought four pearls—one can pick them up round these parts, you know—and so the race began.

"Calthorpe never breathed a word about the arrangement to me, but he took all his savings out of the bank, and I soon guessed what that meant.

"I tell you, we grew to hate the sight of each other. We ate our meals in sullen silence, thinking only of those cursed pearls, and saving and pinching to buy more.

"That was at the beginning of the worst hot weather I have ever known. The boss generally let us have ten days' leave to slip up to the Hills for a change, but that year I never gave it a second thought, and the money went in buying a few more pearls. I cut down expenses till my servants mutinied and left in a body, saying the *dorai* (master) had gone mad. But little I cared, for all the time my string of pearls was growing slowly but steadily longer.

"Ah! Doc, you may laugh now and call us a couple of fools, but you never knew Rani Hersey—and remember we had not set eyes on a decent-looking girl for five years.

"Then, one day, a rumour crept through the bazaars that cholera had broken out. Nothing much at first—just a few cases here and there in the native quarters, but soon it began to claim its victims by the score and more, and spread slowly but surely towards the English settlement. Many of the merchants sent their womenfolk out of the place, but Rani Hersey never budged. Maybe she refused to go; maybe the old man was too busy sweeping in the rupees to give the girl a thought.

"Anyhow, she stayed on till she was almost the only white woman left, and I went about with murder in my heart, for though many a time she swore that I was the one she loved best, yet Calthorpe was never away from her side—he and young Talbot of the Police.

"And so the time dragged on, through the weary, sweltering heat, till it came to within two days of her birthday. In vain I tried to find out the number of pearls Calthorpe had collected, but he was closer than an oyster. Twice during that week I came across a Ceylon jewel merchant sitting waiting outside our office for him. I grew desperate at last, and then—I fell so low that I got hold of his Madrassi dressing-boy, and bribed him with a lavish hand to find out what I wanted.

"He came and told me the night before the dinner-party. Heaven only knows how he managed it! . . . He whispered into my ear that 'his *dorai* had exactly one hundred beads all done tie on one kind string.' And I—I possessed but ninety-eight—and the last pice I could lay hands on had gone.

"Well, the fateful day arrived. Much to my relief, Calthorpe did not put in an appearance at breakfast—a meal we generally ate in moody silence—so, gulping down some food, I went off alone to the factory. I got back in the evening about seven, and as soon as I landed I saw something had gone wrong.

"A knot of gibbering native servants had collected at the edge of the jetty, and as soon as I got out of the launch Calthorpe's boy rushed up to me.

"'Sah!' he gasped. 'Come quickly Master plenty ill—been sick all day.'

"He hurried me off to the bungalow. A dim lamp was burning on a table, and by its light I saw Calthorpe lying huddled up in a curiously twisted heap on his bed. I went up to him and shook his shoulder, but he never moved; I bent down closer, and then I shrank back with a chill of horror—for the chap was stone dead! His glassy eyes were wide open, his lips drawn back in a hideous snarl.

"Doc, you can guess what it was—two of our *peons* had died in the compound only the day before. Suddenly, above the din of the chattering servants, I heard the shrill, faint hoot of a siren—and my heart stood still.

"I knew the sound well enough—it was the Herseys' launch coming across the backwater, and they were on their way to dine with us. In a little while they would be at our jetty.

"For a moment I was too dazed to move.

"'Boy!' I shouted—'quick—take the launch and go fetching Doctor sahib at once. The *dorai* is plenty ill. Hurry now!'

"Again I heard the hooter — nearer. Suddenly a wild thought flashed through my brain.

"'Hi! Wait!' I called to the fleeing boy. 'I sending for Doctor sahib later—you go, keeping boat ready.'

"He stared at me, wondering, and disappeared.

"Fate seemed just playing into my hands for once. Why should the dinner-party

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not take place after all? I could easily make some excuse for Calthorpe's absence, and then—my head whirled at the thought—Rani Hersey would be mine after all!

"I turned the servants out of the room, and threw a sheet over the body, and, as I did so, something fell to the ground with a thud. It was Calthorpe's bunch of keys.

"Ah! His pearls! Perhaps he had already told the girl the number he had collected, and I should lose the game after all.

"Hardly knowing what I did, I hurried over to the safe in the corner of the room, and after a moment or two fumbling with the lock, I opened the door and drew out Calthorpe's string.

"The blood throbbed in my temples as I looked at them. I should never have had a chance, for his lot were far superior to mine—and almost twice the size. As I held them up to the light I heard the Herseys' launch come puffing up to the landing-stage, and, thrusting the pearls into my pocket with my own, I hurried out to meet them.

"Doc! Heaven alone knows how I got through that ghoulish meal! Every minute I expected the servants would give the whole show away, for they crept about like a pack of badly-scared bandicoots, with their eyes never off me, starting at every shadow. I told the Herseys that Calthorpe had been suddenly called away by wire, and could not be back till the next day. To my surprise, Rani appeared to be rather relieved than otherwise at the news.

"It was a brilliant moonlight night, just such a one as this, and after dinner we went out into the verandah. And not five yards from where we sat, Doc, Calthorpe lay wrapped up in his shroud. The sweat broke out on my forehead as the girl pushed back her chair almost against his door, but I dare not breathe a word; things had gone too far by then. The heat was suffocating, and old Hersey soon dropped off into a doze over his cheroot under the punkah in the dining-room.

"My chance had come at last!

"Taking the two strings of pearls from my pocket I laid them softly on the girl's knee.

"'Our bargain, Rani,' I whispered, slipping my arm round her slim waist. 'You remember, sweetheart?'

"She looked at me queerly for a moment, and half pushed my arm away. Then she laughed—a hard, shrill little laugh, winding the pearls in and out of the knot of frangipani blossoms at her breast.

"'Oh, my goodness—why, I'd forgotten all about that rubbish ages ago!' she said quickly, though the tell-tale colour rose to her face. 'Now—be a dear old goose, and listen, for I have a little secret to tell you—and then—say you'll forgive me—and I'll take these dinky drops of moonlight as a wedding present. I adore pearls!'

"She looked round nervously . . .

"'Here's the secret. I—I changed my mind at the last minute—and Jerry Talbot and I were married by special license early this morning. Not a soul knows it yet—not even the old man. Why!—you're not angry with your little Rani, are you?'

"She slipped her hand into mine, but I shook her off.

"Angry! Good heavens! I thought of all those long weary months, the sordid slavery of them, the loss of Calthorpe's friendship—all to get those accursed pearls, and I could have struck her where she sat.

"'Take them!' I shouted, and flung the strings on to the table near her. 'Take them, and clear out of here, and may they be a misery to you as they have been to us! But for you——'

"She cut me short with a mocking laugh, bundling the pearls up with the tiny monkey in her lap, and turned to go.

"'Oh, Rani . . . my Rani!'

"The sudden cry—hoarse, unearthly—rang out quite close to where we stood. I sprang back, and my very blood froze in my veins. The monkey, escaping, hid under the table, gibbering with fright.

"The doors behind us were open, and Calthorpe, the dead man, stood there, swaying and clutching at the heavy reed curtain. His eyes, bloodshot and glaring with fever, were fixed on the trembling girl by my side.

"'Rani,' he sobbed again, and the next moment, with a strange, shambling stride, the sheet trailing behind him, he made a few steps forward, and fell, clasping the shrieking girl in his arms. For a second or two they swayed to and fro against that little parapet over there." Mallinson pointed with a shaking finger across the verandah. "I seized Calthorpe, but he clung on with a grip like a python. At last, with a superhuman effort the girl got one of her hands free, and struck at his face fiercely, again and again, her wonderful copper hair, loosened in the struggle, swirling round her like a veil.

"Suddenly, the fragile marble span gave way, and with a scream that I shall hear to my dying day, the two struggling figures fell with a dreadful thud into the backwater below. You can see the place now, there, where the new bit of wall has been put in.

"We never found the bodies—some say the muggers (alligators) from the big temple up the backwater must have got them."

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Mallinson stopped, and wiped the perspiration off his forehead.

"A year ago—just a year ago to-night, she died."

The Doctor smoked hard for a moment or two, looking curiously at his companion.

"I thought you said Calthorpe was dead when you went to his room?"

Mallinson rose from his chair, and threw away the stump of his cheroot.

"He seemed so to me, but it was one of those cases of coma following cholera. I suppose he heard our voices outside his door, and roused up enough to call for help. And so—Algy Calthorpe won the girl, after all, you see! And yet I loved her, Doc. Often now, as I sit here alone night after night, and the mists creep up the backwater, I can see her, and she calls and beckons to me. Up that strip of verandah she comes, with her flaming hair floating round her—calling—calling. When the frangipani scent is strongest she comes."

The Doctor opened his watch, and getting out of his chair, yawned and stretched himself.

"Nearly midnight, old son," he said, turning to Mallinson. "I'm going to bed—and I'd advise you to do the same, and thank your stars you are off out of this cursed place to-morrow!"

Mallinson nodded, and slipped the pearls back into the dispatch-box.

"Hark!" he said. "Do you hear the wind rising in the palm topes? It's the monsoon breaking. Listen to the backwater, how it frets against the stones. The temple muggers will be uneasy to-night. There! Do you see—that long black shadow floating on the water? The murdering brutes! Well—good-night, Doc."

With a nod Mallinson turned into his room and closed the door.

II.

Crash!

The Doctor sprang up, rubbing his eyes, and coughing with the choking dust that filled the room.

A huge palm, struck by the gale, had fallen across the end of the bungalow, bringing down part of the verandah. As he struggled out of bed a fierce gust of wind snatched and tore at the mosquito nets, swirling them high over the rails.

Outside, the sullen backwater, goaded at last into life by the monsoon, moaned and girded against the bund in impotent fury. Rugged masses of heavy clouds, dark and lowering, scurried across the sky, now tearing themselves apart in great rifts tipped with silver, now hiding the moon.

The old bungalow was full of strange sounds, and the Doctor shivered as he slipped his revolver into his pocket.

Something crept up close beside him, and he recoiled with an oath as a cold, wet hand touched his face, but it was only Mallinson's grey monkey, that had broken loose in terror of the sudden storm. The animal clung to him, gibbering wildly, and pressing its drenched fur against his body. A long piece of broken chain trailed behind it.

The Doctor pushed the beast away, and, stumbling along in the murky darkness, made his way to Mallinson's room and thrust open the door.

"Hi! Wake up, old man!" he shouted. "Half this shanty has collapsed my side. The Lone Palm's down, and my room is in a devil of a mess. Wake up, I say!"

He waited, listening.

There was no answer but the soughing wind, and, with a horrible fear gripping his heart, he began to feel his way slowly round the room till he came to the table where he knew Mallinson kept a reading-lamp.

The wick flickered out with a sudden flare as he lit it, and died down, but he lit it again, and turned towards the bed.

It was empty.

With the lamp shielded in his hand he went across to the bed. On the pillows lay a small sealed packet, and a letter addressed to him in Mallinson's untidy scrawl.

"Doc, old pal (it began):

It's no good fighting against it any longer, so I am going back to her, to Rani. All this evening, as we sat in the verandah, I could hear her calling . . . calling to me through the mist. Whenever the frangipani flowers' scent is strongest, she comes—they were the flowers she loved best.

It has been like this for weeks, and I can stand it no longer.

You'll scoff, I dare say, and say this infernal malaria has turned me queer, but it is God's truth, and I can find no rest.

Take the pearls, old man—they are yours, and may they bring you more luck than they dealt out to me.

Don't bother your head about me—I shall be free from all worry when you get this; but take my advice, and quit these parts—they're not healthy for the white man.

PHILLIP MALLINSON."

For a moment the Doctor stood staring at the bit of paper in his hand, and then let it fall out of his shaking fingers on to the floor.

"Heavens! The backwater's got him!" he muttered. "He's gone . . ."

Slipping the packet containing the pearls into his coat, he turned and stumbled over the *débris*-littered verandah till he reached the parapet. The clouds had drifted clear, and the moon shone out brightly over the great tracts of heaving waters. The thick,

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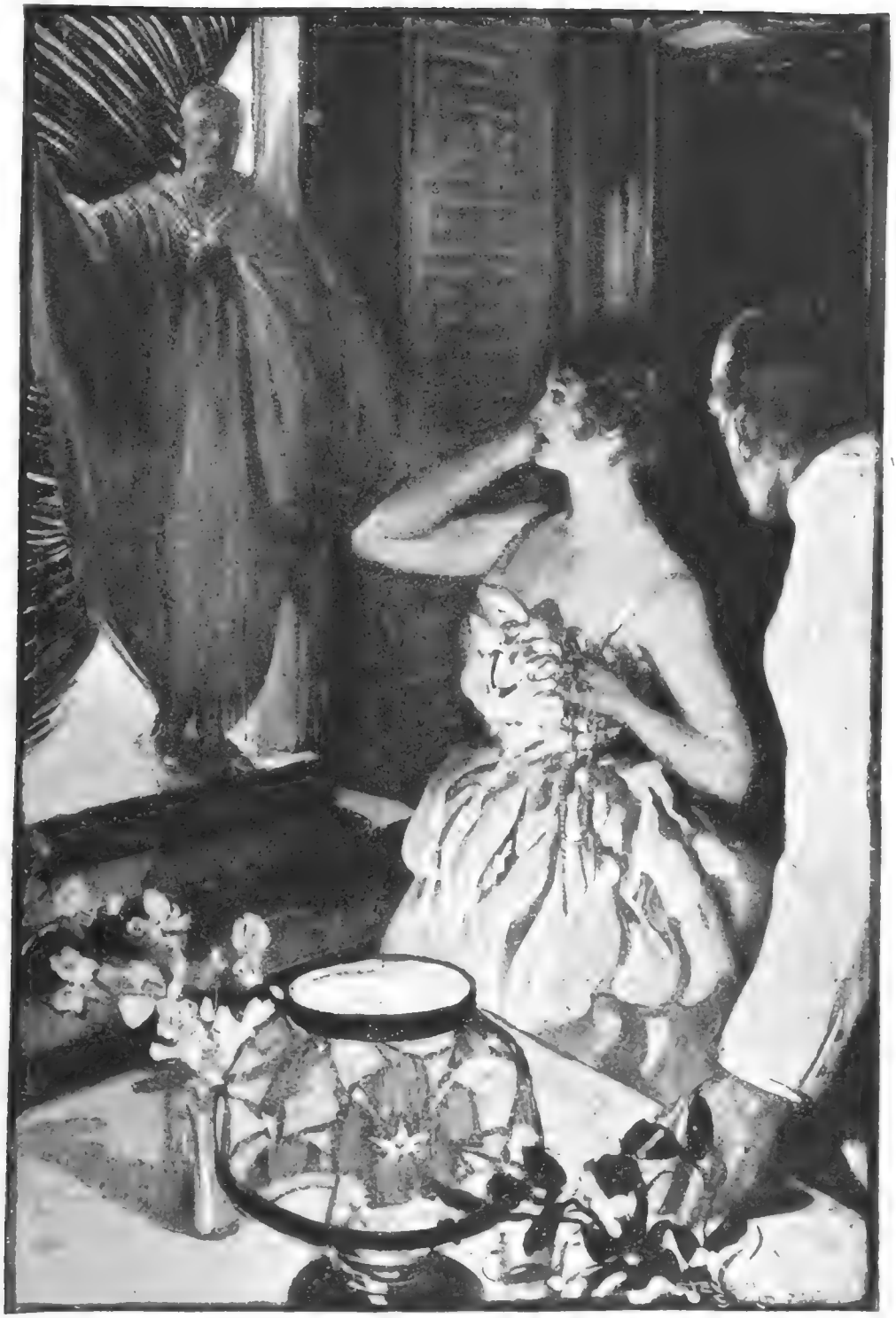

"'Oh, Rani . . . my Rani!' The sudden cry—hoarse, unearthly—rang out quite close to where we stood. . . . The doors behind us were open, and Calthorpe, the dead man, stood there, swaying and clutching at the heavy reed curtain." [*Page* 479, *col.* 2.]

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sickly odour of frangipani blossoms hung everywhere, and the Doctor shuddered. He remembered Mallinson's words: "When the frangipani scent is strongest she comes." Had she indeed come to-night to lure the man who loved her to destruction?

Below where he stood the oily black waters splashed dully against the rough stones of the bund, and the rotting cocoanut fibre, thrown up by the storm, gleamed red in the moonlight, red and copper, like the dead girl's hair—long quivering strands, rising and falling on the crests of the tiny waves, till he almost feared he should see the face of Rani Hersey, white and ghastly, in the midst of them.

As he gazed, half fascinated, a black shadow, lying close by, motionless as a log, suddenly lifted a long, cruel head, and sank noiselessly out of sight.

A second, silent as the first, floated past, another, and yet another.

The Doctor started.

"By gosh!" he shouted as the sinister truth dawned on him, "the temple muggers! They don't come down here for nothing—the murdering devils—they've done poor old Mallinson in! He must have slipped over the parapet here—the very place where the Hersey girl met her death!"

A sudden frenzy of wild rage swept over him as he pictured the horrible, scaly brutes fighting over their prey in the darkness below, and, sick with horror, he turned away, and retraced his steps towards the empty bungalow.

Half-an-hour later a motor-boat slid out from the jetty, and the Doctor, thrusting the precious packet of pearls deeper into the pocket of his coat, took one long glance at the old bungalow, and nodded to the *serang*.

The next moment, with a wailing shriek of her siren, the little craft began to nose her way across the heaving waters to the distant shore.

TO A TOWN TEA-SHOP.

The little tea-shop where we strayed—
  So often strayed yet did not err—
Enshrines within its wistful shade
  Rose-tinted memories of Her.
Scented with aloes, cassia, myrrh,
  It did not flee financial reach;
Delightful Hebes called me 'Sir',
  And cakes were only sixpence each.

How oft my best and brightest pair
  Of riding boots, with joyful touch,
Have pressed Amanda's ankle there,
  Just hard enough, yet not too much!
Our talk, no doubt, was double-Dutch,
  Mere bedlam balderdash, to you,
But ah! we did not think it such,
  And we were lovers, and we knew.

Dear tea-shop of the New Romance,
  Safe in your soft, sequestered gloom
Victims of joyful circumstance
  Still trip to their accustomed doom.
There may they dally in the room
  I filled with such distinguished grace;
To-day I cull a fairer bloom,
  And so I choose a different place.

F. E. B.

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BILL'S PTERODACTYL

By William Freeman.

I cannot tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.''

The sandy-haired man with the battered bowler hat, and collar that looked as though it hadn't been washed since the last Hun victory, paused in his leisurely progress along the Embankment, dropped into the seat beside me and observed that it was a warm day for the time of year.

"Very," I agreed.

"One of them days," said the sandy-haired man, "that brings out the smell o' things. And there's nothing like smells to carry a feller back to the dear dead past. It was a bottle of scent that saved Bill Tugwell from a lunatic asylum or suicide." Bill, the sandy-haired man added, was a particular friend of his.

"Really?" I said, and, eyeing him, found myself wondering at Mr. Tugwell's taste.

"Bill," pursued my companion, edging nearer, "was the only chap I ever knew as got hisself landed with a Pterodactyl. Sort of gift, it was." And before I could escape he had plunged into the narrative.

Mr. Tugwell, I inferred, lived somewhere on the outskirts of Ealing. "Nice little semi-detached house," said the sandy-haired man. "Thirteen-and-six a week, tiled forecourt, 'lectric light, a bathroom with roughcast walls that took the skin off your elbows while you was drying yourself, and a long strip o' garden at the back. Bill was forty-four, married, and with three children just getting old enough to cheek their father. He'd a berth in an insurance company's office in Town at two-seventeen-six a week, with an extra half-crown war bonus—enough for a bloomin' duke to live on."

"Ample!" I agreed.

"Bill," the sandy-haired man pursued, "had a brother, Bert—a reg'lar roving sort, here to-day and gone yesterday, as the saying is. He'd been a sailor and most other things that didn't mean staying long in one place, and at different times he sent curios and so forth home to Bill. Thought a lot o' Bill, he did. And one day last summer Bill got a letter saying that Bert was sending him, for a birthday present, a rare kind o' fruit that looked and tasted like new-laid eggs and came from somewhere in the virgin forests of Brazil, which he'd been exploring. An Indian, Bert said, had given him three cases of the fruit on account of Bert's curing his best squaw of a snake-bite, and Bert hoped that Bill and his family would enjoy the third case as much as he'd enjoyed the other two. So Bill, like the methodical chap he was, wrote straight off, thanking him, intending to post the letter when the fruit arrived.

"That was on Tuesday, and the case didn't come till Saturday afternoon, when Bill was finishing off the chicken-house and run he was putting up at the end of the garden ready for the six Leghorn pullets he bought of a man who was called up, and which was going to keep the family in eggs all the winter, with enough left over to buy a new set of furs for the missus. The case was made o' wickerwork, very strong, with rounded corners.

"'Shove it down by the back door,' says Bill to the man who brought it from the station, and went on with his hammering and sawing. At tea-time, when Mrs. Tugwell came out to see how he was getting on, Bill showed her the case.

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"'Don't you think you're going to scatter straw all over my clean kitchen,' says Mrs. Tugwell, 'nor yet over the lawn. Open it in the chicken-house.'

"So Bill, thinking it wasn't a bad idea and being a proper trained husband, carried the case there. It had started raining, and the children wanted their tea, and no one had the curiosity to follow him. He was glad afterwards that they hadn't.

"He dumped down the case, went back for a knife, and cut through the rough cords that fastened the top of the basketwork. Under that was a thickish layer of tropical grasses, pressed flat, and then a second lid made of a slab of heavy wood like teak. As Bill said afterwards, it was uncommon careful packing, considering the job had been done by poor benighted natives as didn't know an ammunition wagon from a packet o' Woodbines. He wriggled his fingers under the teak to lift it, and felt what he thought was a scratch. But afterwards he knew it was a bite.

"The inner lid came away with a jerk, and the next minute something shot upwards and hit Bill a smack in the face. 'Like warm leather it felt,' he told me. And when he pulled himself together and stared down into the basket there was nothing there but chewed-up husks of fruit and chips of drab-coloured egg-shell and a smell—a smell, Bill said, like you get when you open the cupboard of an empty house where the charwoman's left a plate of stale cheese, only stronger. And when Bill had straightened hisself and got his breath again he saw, sitting on one of the roosting-perches as comfortable as you please, the Pterodactyl.

"Talking it over afterwards, Bill and me came to pretty much the same conclusion about it. In them God-forsaken backlands that the fruit had come from, all sorts of antediluvian beasts could survive without anyone being a penny the wiser. Likely enough there was a whole colony of 'em living in the trees there. And the natives who collected the fruit must have picked up a stray Pterodactyl's egg with the other stuff, and the little beggar had hatched out during the voyage, all warm and comfy down in the hold, and eaten the fruit—which may have been his reg'lar prehistoric diet—and growed till he nearly filled the basket.

"But none o' them details occurred to Bill at the time. He just stood there, in the chicken-'ouse he'd built Anno Domini 1916 out of old boards and Sunlight-soap boxes and felt roofing at 3s. 9d. for fifteen yards, and goggled at that bloomin' survival from the byegone ages. And the survival goggled back at Bill. Seemed to take to him at once, it did."

The sandy-haired one paused.

"How big was the creature?" I asked.

"That long," he said, gesticulating freely, "and *that* wide when his wings was properly spread. 'Bout as large altogether as a skinny turkey—a turkey with an alligator's head, bat's wings, and a smooth, greyish skin. A bloomin' grinnin' nightmare, specially when it yawned. Bill's knees began to knock together, and he came over sick and faint. He began to think he must have died and gone to the wrong place, and that this was his punishment for travelling on the Underground when he was a boy without paying his fare and with intent to avoid payment thereof. Then he heard Mrs. Tugwell's voice calling him to tea, and he knew he wasn't dead, and skipped out of the chicken-house backwards in a hurry and went in.

"'Undone that basket yet?' inquired Mrs. Tugwell.

"'No—er—that is, yes,' says Bill.

"'What's the fruit like?'

"For a minute he thought of saying that it had all gone bad and that he'd chucked it in the dust-bin. But he remembered in time that she'd be certain to look.

"'It was just one o' Bert's jokes,' he said. 'There was nothing there at all.' For somehow, in that sunny room with the cloth laid and his wife spreading butter substitute, and Gladys drinking tea out of her saucer, and Peter and Ermyntrude quarrelling over the jam, the Pterodactyl didn't seem real, or even possible. And Bill was more afraid of his wife than he was of air-raids. Any explaining that had to be done could wait till later.

"'Silly idgit!' says Mrs. Tugwell. 'I shall write and tell him what I think of it all.'

"'Do,' says Bill, 'and I'll post the letter.'

"It wasn't dark till past seven, and after tea Bill said he'd fetch in the basket, which would come in handy to store potatoes in. What he really wanted was to see if the Petrodactyl was still there, or if he'd just imagined it. He found the beast right enough, crouching in a far corner of the chicken-house. It made a queer, clucking noise, as if it were pleased to see him, and made short work of a cabbage leaf Bill had picked up on his way. Bill went back into the parlour thinking pretty hard. His wife was trying to cut a blouse out of two-yards-and-a-quarter, and as she was a stout woman she was too busy to bother Bill much.

"He went to bed early, but he couldn't sleep. And I don't wonder at it myself. Here was he, the owner of a bloomin'

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"When Bill had straightened hisself and got his breath again he saw, sitting on one of the roosting-perches as comfortable as you please, the Pterodactyl."

anachronism that might make his fortune or ruin him absolutely. 'Twasn't as though he could leave the Pterodactyl alone in the house, for the pullets were due to arrive on Monday. What he ought to have done, of course, was to have made a clean breast of things to his wife, she being a sensible, strong-minded woman as would have seen a way through the problem. But he didn't; he couldn't. He'd sort of got out of the way of making clean breasts of things. Finally, as the clock of the Diamond Jubilee Memorial clock-tower was chiming three—they hadn't stopped the chimes in those days—he decided to speak to Mott about it on Monday.

"Mott, who worked in the next room to Bill, was ten years older, with a wife who was even more strong-minded, and several more children. Also, he had a cousin who knew a man who was related to a Fellow of the Zoological Society. Bill reckoned that a young and healthy Pterodactyl ought to be worth a cool thousand to the Society any day of the week.

"Sunday came along, and he managed to pay two visits to the chicken-house with a basin of water and a plate of greenstuff. He assumed the animal was a vegetarian, though he wasn't sure—then. It had made a sort of nest for itself in the corner, where you wouldn't notice it unless it moved, or you caught the glare from its eyes. It seemed sleepy, and Bill was afraid it might die, in which case he reckoned its value would drop by a good fifty per cent. He had a second bad night, and woke up so late on Monday that he had to make a dash for the 8.37. He forgot all about the Pterodactyl till he met Mott in the dinner-hour, and then he found it thundering hard to make a start.

"'Look here, old chap,' he says at last, 'a friend of mine wants advice. He's had a most extraordinary pet sent him as a birthday present—a creature belonging to another age.'

"'If you're alluding to a mummy——' says Mott.

"'I'm not,' says Bill. 'It's a heap older than a mummy, and yet alive. A beast belonging to prehistoric times, in fact.' He went on to describe the Pterodactyl.

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"'Did your friend tell you all this?' says Mott.

"'Er—yes,' says Bill.

"'I'd like to meet him,' says Mott, 'and talk it over. What are the visiting days?'

"'Meaning,' says Bill, getting red about the ears, 'that you don't believe me—him?'

"'Meaning,' says Mott, 'that I've known patients a jolly sight saner kept in a padded cell. You take my tip, old chap, and drop his society till they let him out again on a doctor's certificate.'

"He managed to pay two visits to the chicken-house with a basin of water and a plate of greenstuff." [*Page* 485, *col.* 1.]

"So Bill went home feeling rather chipped. His wife met him at the door.

"'The fowls have come,' she says cheerfully. 'I got the man to put 'em in the run for me. He said the place needed more ventilation.'

"'Did he?' says Bill with a sickly grin. 'Well, you go and get the tea, and I'll have a look at 'em.'

"But, of course, because he particularly didn't want her to, she came to the end of the garden with him. The pullets were huddled together in a bunch in one corner of the run.

"'I can see five,' she says, 'but where's the sixth?'

"'How should I know?' says Bill, his heart in his boots. 'I expect one of 'em escaped on the journey.'

"'There were six in the crate,' says Mrs. Tugwell. 'See if the other's in the house, William.'

"So Bill opened the door and peered in. And in the far corner was a neat little pile o' feathers, and behind them the Pterodactyl, grinning fit to kill itself.

"'What on earth's happened?' says his wife, as Bill backed out again, for his face had gone a sort of pale green.

"'I've come over a bit faint for want of food,' says Bill. 'If only you'd got the tea when I asked you——'

"The next morning he got up extra early, and went down to the hen-house to count the pullets again. This time there were only four in the run. But the heap of feathers in front of the Pterodactyl was twice as big, with a wish-bone and two claws among 'em. Bill fairly gnashed his teeth at the sight, and the Pterodactyl gnashed his, and finally Bill dashed back into the house and grabbed the clothes-basket, and dropped it over the beast, and put a footscraper over the top to keep it down. And then he went in and explained that a second chicken had got away, and was probably in the garden of the curate next door.

"'Then,' says Mrs. Tugwell—as he'd hoped she would—'you can see Mr. Bleer about it yourself. I'm not going to waste all day chicken-hunting.' And Bill said he would directly he got back from Town.

"The curate hisself opened the door when Bill called. He was an earnest young man, very pained because Bill had refused to subscribe to the League for Promoting a Better Feeling among the Belligerents which he'd founded. He steered Bill into the sitting-room, and waited for him to begin. And Bill was by this time too desperate to start any silly flapdoodle about the friend who'd had a prehistoric birthday present, and got right away with the facts. Mr. Bleer listened carefully, standing in front of the fireplace and wagging his head at intervals.

"'And can you let me see this—er—anomaly?' he says at last.

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"'I can,' says Bill, 'if you don't mind coming in quietly through the side gate. Because I haven't mentioned the matter to my wife.'

"'A fact,' says the curate, fetching his hat from the hall, 'which strikes me as highly injudicious.'

"'You wait till you're married,' says Bill. 'This way, sir.'

"There were still four pullets in the run. Bill opened the door of the house, and the two men stared in. The clothes-basket was right-side-up again, the foot-scraper beside it, and a board that Bill had been nailing on Saturday and forgotten to finish was shoved on one side. But the Pterodactyl——

"'Gone!' gasps Bill. 'If only you could have seen it——'

"'I can never be sufficiently thankful,' says the curate, very stiff and solemn, 'that I did *not* see it. A man who alleges that he has been confronted by a creature possessing an alligator's head and a bat's body is in a bad way. For the sake of yourself and your family, Mr. Tugwell, let me implore you, before it is too late, to shun——'

"The curate was still telling him what to shun when Mrs. Tugwell came down the path.

"'Found the lost chicken?' she asks.

"'What chicken?' says the curate.

"'The one William went to look for in your garden,' says Mrs. Tugwell.

"'No domestic fowl of any sort has escaped into my garden,' says the curate sternly, and goes home convinced that Bill's moral Zeppelin has come down for good.

"As for Bill hisself, he spent the evening wishing he was dead and buried in stiff clay soil a million feet down, with buttercups blooming overhead and no goggle-eyed antediluvians to make his life a misery. He went to bed so tired that he dropped asleep at once in spite of his worries, and wouldn't have woke up before daylight if Mrs. Tugwell hadn't started making noises like the syren of an Atlantic liner.

"'What is it?' cries Bill, rubbing his eyes.

"'Burglars!' says Mrs. Tugwell, 'scrummaging about on the landing. Get the poker and stop 'em directly.' She gave Bill a push as she spoke, and eventually he woke up enough to shuffle into a dressing-gown, grab the poker, and open the door.

"There was an electric light outside, and, after waiting a minute in dead silence, he switched it on. And there, perched on the end of the banisters, was the Pterodactyl. (Afterwards they found the pantry-window ajar and a corner chewed off one of Mrs. Tugwell's war-time rock cakes.) It began chattering for joy when it saw him, and hopped down. Bill gave a yell and backed into the bedroom and slammed the door. He'd have locked it if the charwoman hadn't lost the key the week before.

"'Coward!' says Mrs. Tugwell. To think that I should live to see this night!'

"'You won't live to see it,' says Bill, 'unless you pull yourself together. . . . There it goes again!' For the beast had started scrabbling on the woodwork with its claws, and the sound was like no other sound on earth.

"Mrs. Tugwell started a fresh series of screams. Her mother had once told Bill, in his courting days, that there wasn't a trace of lung-trouble in the

"Perched on the end of the banisters was the Pterodactyl. . . . It began chattering for joy when it saw him, and hopped down. Bill gave a yell and backed into the bedroom and slammed the door."

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family, but he'd never properly realised it before. When the door-handle began to turn Bill lost his nerve altogether. He dashed to the dressing-table and grabbed the first thing handy—a bottle of a new sort of perfume his wife had bought the day before, called 'The Lure of the Tropics.' He opened the door again and slung the bottle at the Pterodactyl. The bottle hit the wall just above, and broke, fairly drenching the beast. At that it gave one weak, pitiful cry and collapsed."

"At its master's hard-heartedness?" I said, as the sandy-haired man stopped for breath.

"No, sir, of a broken heart. For that scent embodied all the nameless charms of its native wilds—the soft breath of the night winds, the warm perfumes that follow the rain, the mysterious fragrance of the trailing growths of the jungle. . . . Sank down in a heap it did, and died there and then of home-sickness. And Bill seized it by the neck, and slung it through the landing window, where it dropped on to the roof of the coal-shed, and from there into Bingberry's yard, where Bingberry kept the worst-tempered dog in the West London area. After that Bill went back to his wife, who'd fainted dead away, and at last brought her round.

"And the one and only stroke of luck Bill had out of the whole business was when he was able to persuade her that the entire thing was a nightmare, and that he'd dropped and broke the scent-bottle when he took it out on to the landing to uncork it, hoping the smell would bring her round. And though he hunted for traces of the Pterodactyl next morning there wasn't any, but Bingberry's dog was dead. Bingberry offered ten shillings to find out who'd poisoned it, but no one got the reward."

The narrative was obviously at an end, and I made as if to go.

"'Arf a minute," said the sandy-haired man, detaining me. "That scent was invented and manufactured in Ealing by me, and it was me as sold it to Mrs. Tugwell. And when Bill called for another bottle, as a peace-offering, he told me the whole story."

He produced from his pocket a dingy flask to which a label, "Trugg's Tonic for Tired Toilers" still adhered.

"Owing to shortage of labour I am unable to supply my own bottles, but if you care to invest in a sample at the small price of sixpence——"

I invested in the sample and he departed. The liquid, as I have since discovered, consists of Thames water, pure and simple. The same adjectives scarcely apply to its sandy-haired vendor. My watch—a presentation one from my Aunt Sybella—was missing; likewise a leather case containing a special-constable's warrant and three Treasury notes. I do not expect to recover them, but I am not inconsolable. To a certain extent I consider that I have had value for my money.

CUPID TAKES A HAND

Three soldier men came home on leave,
They'd lost some kit, but 'tis a fact
That, though not worn upon his sleeve,
Each one had kept his heart intact.

This Cupid saw, and shook his head;
"They've all been shooting," murmured he,
"*I'd* better take a turn instead,
I'll draw my bow, and we shall see!"

Three pretty maids then came in sight,
And hearts were rapidly exchanged;
So Cupid read, with huge delight;
"Three marriages have been arranged!"

Leslie M. Oyler.

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A Bit of A Tomboy

By Hélène Williams.

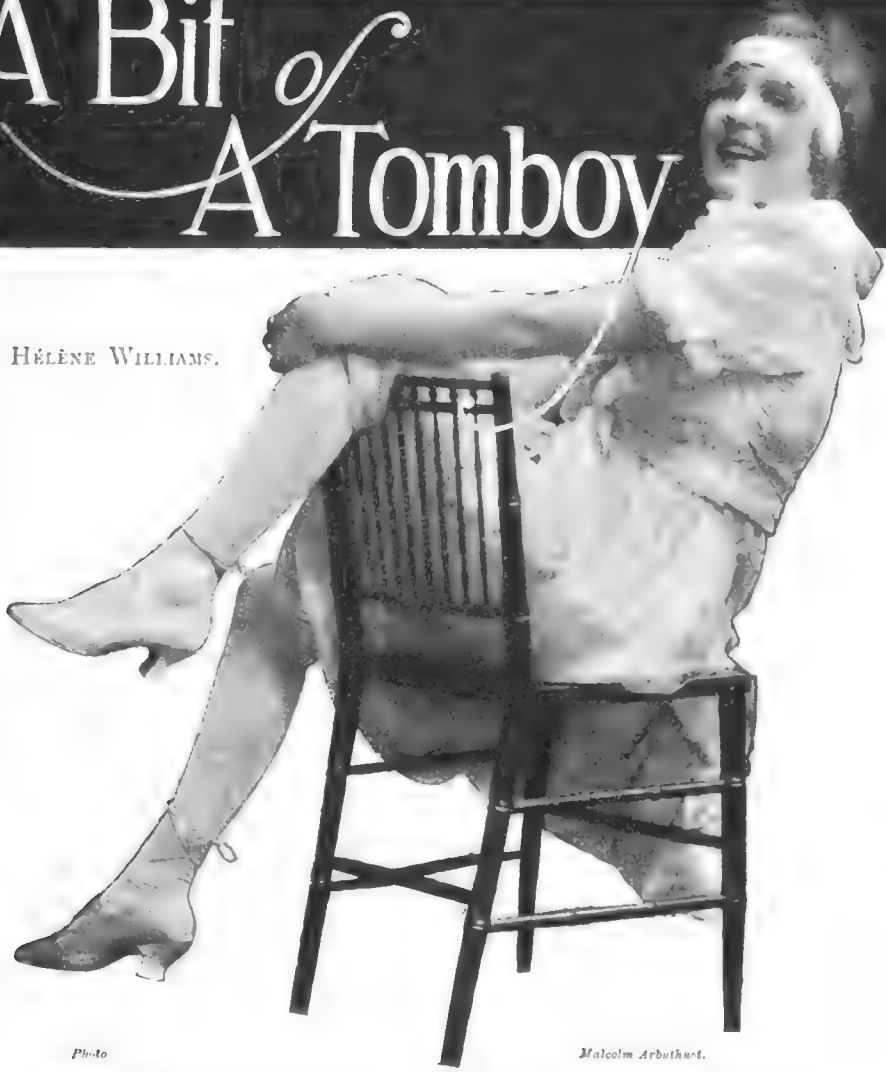

Photo Malcolm Arbuthnot.

Miss Hélène Williams frankly confesses that tomboyish pranks have lost none of their charm for her now that she has attained to riper years.

The girl who has a bit of the tomboy in her is always refreshing, and the confessions of Miss Hélène Williams, one of our prettiest musical comedy actresses, will wake a responsive thrill in the hearts of many readers who share her love of wholesome fun and merriment.—Ed. R.M.

Perhaps I ought to have been a boy; certainly I longed to be one in my youthful days, when petticoats proved a decided handicap in climbing trees and scaling fences. Of course, I tore my clothes frequently—nothing short of oilcloth or armour-plate could have lived for a week in my company without succumbing. I yearned vainly for the comfort and glorious ease of knickerbockers, and I am afraid I took a wicked satisfaction in rending my garments, in the hope that my long-suffering parents would see the wisdom of me and my skirts parting company.

Now that I have attained to—well, not to be too precise, let us say to riper years!—I still cherish a sneaking regard for trousers in various forms. You should see my eyes sparkle when it falls to my lot to wear a trousered suit on the stage—nothing rejoices me more, and, of course, I am a staunch adherent of pyjamas. Not so pretty as

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nightgowns! Well, all I can say is you haven't seen mine!

Naturally, I've sobered down considerably since the days when I used cheerfully to put my frocks on back to front, and toboggan on a tea-tray down the front stairs. But I'm still fond of running and climbing, and have not lost my youthful love of swings, see-saws, and even—dare I confess it?—sliding down the banisters!

I regret to say that my fondness for skylarking nearly landed me in trouble on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion. We were staying—a girl friend and I—at a seaside hotel of unspeakable dulness. It was clearly our duty to liven things up a bit—our motives were always of the best!—and we accordingly proceeded to break down the barrier of convention which forbade anyone to speak to anyone else without the production of a birth certificate and family pedigree.

Accordingly we rose while the day was still young, and, garbed in a becoming blue dressing-gown and boudoir cap in case of surprises, I stole along the corridor and

Photos *Malcolm Arbuthnot.*

Petticoats were nothing more or less than a penance to Miss Williams in her very youthful days, and she took the greatest delight in rending her skirts in the vain hope of being allowed to wear knickerbockers.

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Miss Williams' taste in night attire, runs much more comfy than nightgowns to pyjamas, which she declares are and equally becoming, while——

commenced my self-appointed task of changing the boots and shoes that stood outside the various doors. There was a wide range of footwear, from the brown top-boots of a crusty old Colonel to the blameless house-shoes of Miss Primly, an elderly spinster, who knew 348 different crochet patterns and possessed a Maltese lace collar from which she was never parted. I had just placed the house-shoes outside the Colonel's door and was installing his top-boots on the spinster's mat, when his door, which was at the far end of the corridor, opened, and I caught a glimpse of his ruddy face and fierce white moustache.

In a panic I turned to flee, and as I did so my bracelet slipped off my wrist and fell, as luck would have it, plump into one of the Colonel's boots. I dare not stop to retrieve it; I sprinted for my room like a scared rabbit, and even as I shut the door I heard the Colonel advancing menacingly up the corridor. Five minutes later I peeped out; the spinster's shoes were in their lawful place, the top-boots had vanished, and my bracelet with them!

Now I had a very warm affection for that bracelet—never mind why!—and I couldn't bear the thought of losing it. And yet it was in the custody of the Colonel, who probably yearned to give me forty days' C.B., and would doubtless hold on to it until I abased myself before him. I am afraid I am an unrepentant person, but for the sake of my trinket I braved the wrath of the Army and made suitable apology. To my unbounded amazement, his rather forbidding countenance relaxed into a smile.

"Never mind, young lady," he said confidentially. "Here's your bracelet, and I bear you no grudge. You see, I've been trying for weeks to break through Miss Primly's barbed wire entanglements, and now, thanks to you, they're down. She simply had to thaw when I told her about the boot and shoe business."

Miss Primly is "Mrs. Colonel" now; I was their bridesmaid, and the Colonel gave me a bracelet with a pair of tiny gold top-boots attached.

Photos Malcolm Arbuthnot.

——nothing delights her more than to be allotted a stage part wherein she can sport the trousered suit she longed for in childhood's days.

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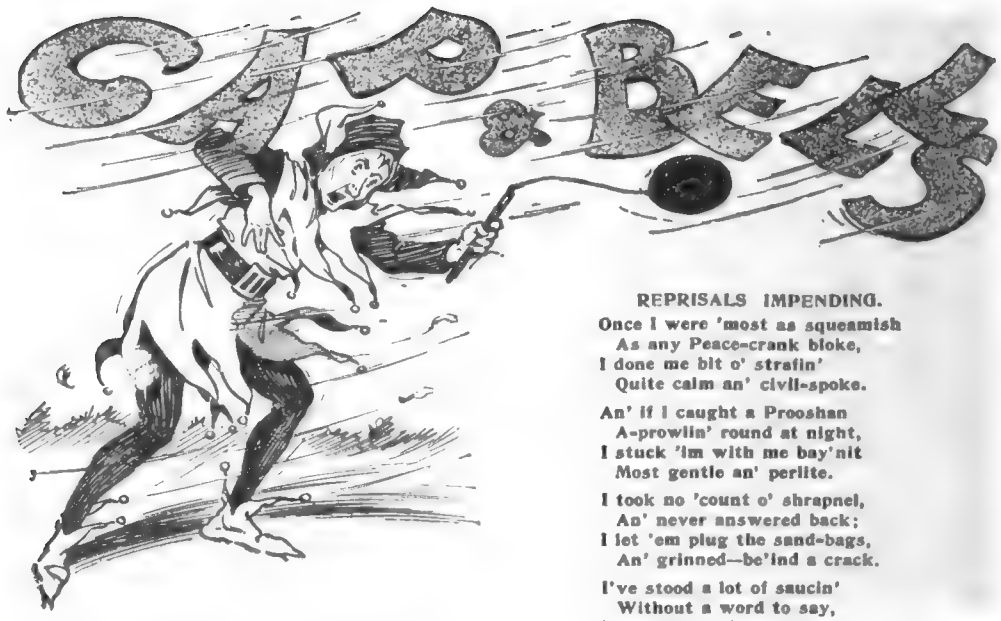

REPRISALS IMPENDING.

Once I were 'most as squeamish
As any Peace-crank bloke,
I done me bit o' strafin'
Quite calm an' civil-spoke.

An' if I caught a Prooshan
A-prowlin' round at night,
I stuck 'im with me bay'nit
Most gentle an' perlite.

I took no 'count o' shrapnel,
An' never answered back;
I let 'em plug the sand-bags,
An' grinned—be'ind a crack.

I've stood a lot of saucin'
Without a word to say,
But now they've smashed me cutty,
The 'ounds 'as got to pay!

Anne Page.

NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE.

A couple in the West had a boy who was generally understood to be dumb, never having been known to utter a word up to his seventh year.

One day he and his father were in the harvest field. It was very hot, so the father paused for a drink of cider. As he was slowly imbibing from the jar, the boy said: "Make haste!"

The father let fall the jar in astonishment. "Why, Jan," he exclaimed, as he stared at the boy, "you'm talkin'; why didden ye spake avore?"

"Hadn't got nowt to zay," replied Jan laconically.

THE EDITORIAL TOUCH.

REPORTER: "What shall I say about old Mulligrubs, the millionaire, whom you sent me to interview? He kicked me downstairs!"

Editor: "Oh, just say that he declined, with much emphasis, to express any opinion whatever at this crisis."

THE WORST OF ALL.

"What is the most difficult disease you have to contend with?" asked the student.

"Imagination," replied the doctor.

SMALL CHILD (seeing a furry caterpillar on the ground): "Mummy, here's one of your muff's little babies."

INNOCENT AMUSEMENT.

Silence in the kitchen was always to be regarded with mistrust—when little Laura was there. Her mother had learnt this from long experience. And Laura was in the kitchen now—ominously silent.

Hence the voice from the adjoining pantry:

"What are you doing, dearie?"

"Nuffin, mother," answered Laura.

"Are you sure?" asked the mother, still busy with her cups and saucers.

"Well, I isn't doing much."

A moment's pause.

"I'm only dwiving hairpins into the soap with your new silver milk-jug."

A GIFT OF NATURE.

"An' whit's the maitter wi' you?" demanded Sandy.

"Naething's th' maitter wi' me. Why?"

"Ye gied me a nesty look."

"Me? Ye certainly hev a nesty look, bit I didna gie y't."

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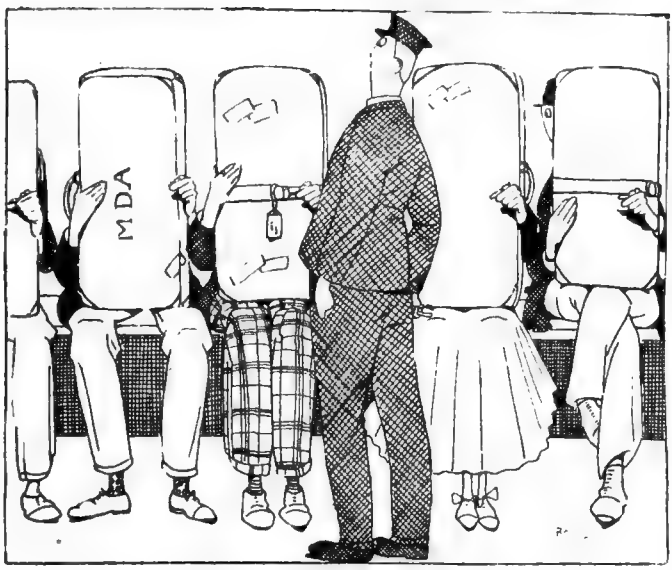


HAND LUGGAGE ONLY!

Stupefaction of the Ticket Inspector, who is convinced that the barrier of luggage conceals the guilty faces of passengers travelling in a first-class carriage with third-class tickets.

A FAULT IN COMMON.

The stout party had been in the boot shop over an hour, and the patient shop assistant had had half the stock down for her inspection. She found fault with them all until his patience became quite exhausted.

"These would suit you," he said, taking another pair down as a last resource. Still the lady was not satisfied.

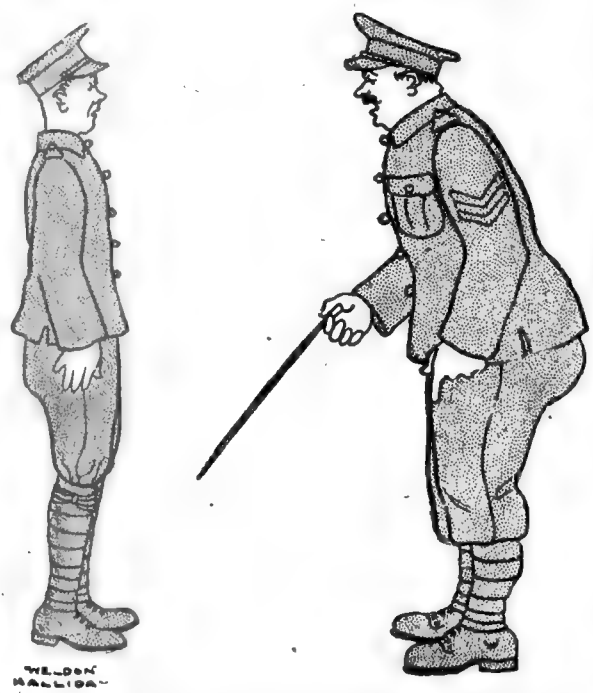
"I don't like this sort," she said. "They have a tendency to get wider when they are a bit old."

"Well, madam," retorted the exasperated assistant politely, "didn't you?"

NO EXCUSE.

M'PHAIRSON: "I canna offer ye a drink, Donal—ye ken, I follow the King."

M'TAVISH: "I never knew ye to offer me a drink at any time, M'Phairson; but it's the first time ye ha' had an excuse."



WELDON HALLIDAY

SERGEANT (to former "knut"): "'Ere, that ain't the way to put yer puttees on. Yer trousers should be folded three inches below the knee, like mine. You'll have to learn to take a little more pride in yer appearance now you've joined the Army, my lad."

HUMANITY.

Little Ethel was usually very fond of salad, so that the rest of the family were much surprised when one day she refused to partake of a particularly elaborate and inviting one.

"Won't you have any?" asked her mother, towards the end of the meal. "We've eaten it nearly all now. Why don't you want it to-day?"

"I felt so sorry for the caterpillars," vouchsafed Ethel at last, "when I saw cook chopping them up!"

DUTY FIRST.

"One of the old stock," was the host's description of James, the old and trusted head butler.

That immaculate servant knew to a nicety the right degree of servility to adopt to his master's guests, according to their rank. He never slipped, he never smiled, and to see him conducting operations at a dinner-party was to see an artist at work.

And yet to-night James, the immaculate, was plainly unnerved. Courses were served in their wrong order, wine was spilt, and, as a final blow, salt was upset upon a very superstitious and important old gentleman.

"Anything wrong, James?" the host had inquired, soon after the dinner started.

"No, sir," gallantly answered the old servant.

At last, however, when the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, he begged a word with the host.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he murmured, in a respectful undertone, "but might I have leave for a few moments now? My house is on fire!"

INSPIRATION.

There were some questions in geography in a recent Civil Service examination. Among them was: "Name five animals that live in the Arctic zone."

One young man wrote: "Three polar bears and two seals."

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THE GREAT DRAWBACK.

Johnny had just gone to school, and, to his parents' delight, continued to thrive exceedingly, and to be as happy as only a schoolboy can be.

His father, therefore, was somewhat surprised and not a little disappointed, when one morning about three weeks later Johnny burst into the breakfast-room and said:

"I'm fed up with school, father. I don't think I'll go any more."

"Not go any more! What d'you mean, boy? What's the matter with school?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Johnny, thrusting a hand into each of his trouser pockets, "but it seems to break up the day so!"

BUTCHER: "Yes, madam, lamb is one-and-six a pound now."
HOUSEWIFE: "And did you raise it yourself, Mr. Bones?"
BUTCHER: "Yes, madam. It was one-and-four yesterday."

TROUBLE EITHER WAY.

ANXIOUS OLD LADY: "I say, my good man, is this boat going up or down?"

DECKHAND: "Well, she's a leaky auld tub, mem, so I widna winder if she wis goin' doon. But then, again, her b'ilers are no the best, so she micht gang up."

FISH, FLESH, OR FOWL?

A little girl who had hash for supper the other evening looked long and earnestly at the last mouthful of her share as she poised it on her fork. Then she passed it out of sight. But the mystery still engrossed her mind.

"Daddy," she said, "what was hash when it was alive?"

PROPERTY AT PERTH.

Montagu Brown was full of military ardour, and he was endeavouring to enlist in the London Scottish. Of course, he was asked if he were a Scotsman.

"No; not much," he replied.

"Parents Scotch?" asked the Staff-Sergeant.

"No, Bethnal Green," said Montagu.

"Well, unless you have some connection with Scotland you can't join," he was told. He pondered for a moment.

"I've got some property in Scotland," he said at last.

"Ah, that will be all right!" said the Sergeant; and proceeded to enlist him.

Before he left, however, the Sergeant turned to him.

"Would you mind informing me in what part of Scotland your property is situated?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said the recruit. "I've got a cricket blazer in the dye works at Perth."

Q Q Q

FOUL PLAY.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones were very proud and fond of their chickens. Great therefore was their consternation when, on going out the other morning for their breakfast eggs, they noticed that a favourite hen was missing.

"It must have been stolen," said Jones. Just then he observed Brown, next door, digging in his garden.

Brown, who was a man of few words, was usually in bed at this hour, so Jones put his head over the wall.

"Good morning! What are you working at so early in the day?" he asked suspiciously.

"Planting."

"Planting what?" persisted Jones.

"Seeds," said Brown.

There was a snort from Jones, who had suddenly seen something.

"Seeds?" he shouted. "Why, that's one of my fowls you're burying, you scoundrel!"

"That's all right—seeds inside!" said the laconic Brown, as he resumed his digging.

ON THE SPOT.

"What is your name, little boy?" inquired the kindergarten teacher of her new pupil.

"I don't know," said the little boy bashfully.

"Well, what does your father call you?"

"I don't know"—still more bashfully.

"What does your mother call you when she's baking and has a cake for you?"

"She don't call me," beamed the new pupil; "I'm there already."

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NO TIME FOR ARGUMENT.

GENTLEMAN: "I want to catch the four o'clock train from Paddington, cabby. What will the fare be?"

CABBY: "Sure, if you want to catch the four o'clock train from Paddington you've got no time to haggle about the fare."

DATED——!

"Four, to-morrow," Mary stated,
So at four o'clock I waited.
As I stood, deliberated
If unpunctual ways were fated.
Four-fifteen—quite irritated!
Twenty past—most aggravated!
At the half-hour, how I rated
Mary and her ways belated!
Twenty to—here I'd stagnated
Forty minutes; I was sated.
Hurriedly my mind gyrated
Round her letter, and collated
All the facts that she related.
"Four, to-morrow." Letter dated—
What! The tenth! How antiquated!
Yesterday for me she waited!

Agnes M. Miall.

THE LIMIT.

The Navy's newest recruit was hauled before the Commander of the naval barracks on a charge of insubordination. The Petty Officer explained that the man had resisted when they took him to the swimming baths for the first lesson in the art of natation.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" asked the Commander.

"Well, sir, it's like this 'ere. I've only been in the Navy three days. The first day the doctor drawed six of me teeth out, the second day I was 'oculated, an' this mornin' the Petty Officer comes along to me an' he says: 'Come on, you pup, we're agoin' ter drown yer!'"

COCKNEY URCHIN: "See what the bloomin' rainy weather's been an' done! It's sproutin' young umbrellas."

A MODEST REQUEST.

Sarah Jane was a model of everything that a domestic servant should be, save for this fault—she was very jealous of a certain Mrs. Scraggs, a former fellow-servant, who never tired of writing to tell her of the glories of her new home.

"To think of 'er sauce and airs and graces, ma'am!" she said to her mistress. "Eliza Scraggs writes sayin' she 'as a conservatory now. Rats! I'll lay all the conservatory she's got, or is hever likely to git, is a couple of cracked flower-pots, with geraniums in 'em on the kitchen window-sill. I'll get even with 'er."

"You shouldn't let such trifles trouble you, Sarah," said her mistress.

"Well, ma'am, whether or not, I'm going to ask you a favour."

"What is that, Sarah?"

"I was thinkin' that if I 'ired a motor-car and got the photographer to come up, pra'ps you wouldn't mind me and the maister being taken together in the car. That would be a settler for 'Liza Scraggs when I sent 'er th' photo!"

THE TABLES TURNED.

What happened in the Stone Age when Mrs. Flintface tried to give the dogs a bath.

WELL PLACED.

"Well, there's one thing I must say I rather like to see in a German."

"What, sir? Call yourself a patriot? What the mischief can there be you like to see in a German, sir?"

"A bullet!"

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THE HOLE IN THE CLIFFS

By "Taffrail."

The adventures of naval officers are not always confined to the sea, and it sometimes happens that when on leave they manage to combine romance and excitement. This was the case with Lieutenant-Commander Crawley, whose thrilling experience on the Cornish coast is delightfully chronicled in the following story by "Taffrail," the popular naval author.

I.

James Montgomery Crawley, Lieutenant-Commander, R.N., seemed to have been born under a lucky or an unlucky star. This rather contradictory statement is not quite so contradictory as it sounds, for though James was dogged by calamity he always came up smiling.

The misfortunes which beset him are acts of God, so to speak, happenings over which he has no control, and which might be visited upon anyone, but which, guided no doubt by the evil genius who rules his destiny, always seem to fasten themselves upon him. Not that he cares a twopenny expletive. What nerves he possesses are made of wrought steel, and though by rights he should have been dead and buried years ago, nature has considerately provided him with the nine, or the ninety-nine, lives of the proverbial cat.

His narrow shaves began at a very early age, but his really exciting record started with the present war. When hostilities began he was in command of a destroyer in the North Sea, and presently, through no fault of his, she had the ill-luck to be blown up by a German mine. The ship, badly-holed, did not float very long, but James and his merry men all got away with their lives. Then, to give him more or less of a quiet time after his unnerving experience, the authorities sent him to one of the older battleships. There they seem to have forgotten all about him, for when the ship went to the Dardanelles a few months later James, to his great delight, went with her.

An easy time, forsooth! They assisted at the landing of the troops and at the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and generally had the time of their lives in bombarding the Turkish positions and in being shelled and hit, by way of a *quid pro quo*. But the greatest adventure of all happened one night when the ship was sunk by a torpedo from a submarine. She foundered in a very short time, but James, clad in a uniform cap and a bath-towel, escaped as usual by the skin of his teeth, to come home and to be appointed to the command of another destroyer after a short spell of sick-leave.

It was in this ship that he was present at the battle of Jutland, and in the night *mêlée* which followed the action his vessel, albeit she is popularly supposed to have sunk a German battleship with her torpedoes, was badly mauled in the process, while James himself and many of his men were wounded. So they sent him to hospital, whence he emerged in due course and again proceeded on sick-leave.

The West Country, even if it is rather enervating, has a charm and fascination all its own; but it was not the beauty of the rugged coast scenery which caused James, some time later, to persuade his mother that Porthcannon was the one spot in the British Isles where he should spend a portion of his leave. Mrs. Crawley, indeed, who was inclined rather to overdo the "fond mother" business and insisted on being with him, was frankly bored at the prospect of living for a month in indifferent rooms in what was really nothing more nor less than a Cornish fishing village, and did not hesitate to say so.

"Who is she?" she demanded, scenting some ulterior motive when James first broached the subject.

Her son had the grace to blush.

"She!" he said in feigned surprise. "How d'you know it's a she?"

His mother smiled.

"I know you better than you know

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yourself, Jim," she answered mysteriously. "Besides, you have been getting fat letters twice a week regularly with the Porthcannon postmark, and I'm tolerably certain that neither your tailor nor your bootmaker go there for their holidays. I do hope she's—er—nice!"

She seemed rather doubtful about it.

"I didn't know you'd noticed," he said. "As a matter of fact she's a perfect topper. We're practically engaged."

Mrs. Crawley nodded.

"I thought as much," she sighed. "But are you quite serious, Jim?"

There was a trace of anxiety in her voice, for to her certain knowledge this was not the first, nor yet the sixth, girl in which her youngest son had evinced an overwhelming interest.

"Of course I'm serious. What d'you take me for?"

"And what is her name?"

"Josephine Boggs."

The lady raised her eyebrows in mild astonishment.

"Josephine how much?" she inquired acidly.

"Boggs, B O double G S," repeated her son, submitting to the ruthless cross-examination. "I call her Jo for short."

"I don't like the sound of it," said Mrs. Crawley, sniffing.

"She can't help that, poor girl!" James explained. "Her father's Sir Jasper Boggs, Coronation knighthood, you know. He owns something or other in South Wales, ships or mines or something, and is rolling in money. He's not a bad old fellow at all, but I can't cotton on to old Mother Boggs, somehow."

"I see. And do Sir what-d'you-call him and Lady Boggs approve of your—er—engagement with their daughter?"

"Haven't asked 'em; but I don't think the old geezer minds one way or the other. The old girl's a bit of a snag though. She wants Jo to marry a title, not a poor devil like me. However, we've both made up our minds about it, and as she's twenty-three and has had all sorts of blokes runnin' after her ever since she put her hair up she should know what she's about."

"Your expressions are very vulgar, James," said his mother with a touch of asperity. "Remember, though, this isn't the first time you have made up your mind about a girl."

James shrugged his shoulders and smiled, but the next Friday as ever was saw them at Porthcannon.

II.

Even the critical Mrs. Crawley was forced to admit that, except for her hideous surname, there was nothing at all amiss with Miss Josephine Boggs. She was in every way a "nice" girl, and though it was perfectly obvious that she had always been accustomed to the best of everything she was still quite unspoilt and unaffected.

Her eyes were grey, she had a clear, slightly-tanned complexion, regular white teeth, and a well-shaped but very firm little mouth, rather a *retroussé* nose, and a magnificent head of reddish-golden hair, about which James used to rave. Her taste in dress, unlike that of her mother, which was atrocious, was unerring, but her simply-cut coats and skirts always bore the hall-mark of an expensive tailor.

In fact, Josephine was a typical specimen of a fearless, healthy, straightforward English girl, who made a good impression wherever she went and was quite capable of looking after herself in any circumstances. She was a perfect little devil when really angry, but for all that James was a man to be envied.

The middle-aged Sir Jasper was pleasant, rotund, and rather breathless. His parentage was obscure, but he never made the least bones about his ancestry, and prided himself on being a self-made man. He was red-faced and slightly deaf, with a disposition as mild as a lamb's. If anything, he was too mild, for "Mother," as he sometimes called his wife, usually ruled and bullied him with a rod of iron, while Josephine, whom he adored, twiddled him round her little finger.

Lady Boggs was an expansive, rather overdressed, bejewelled lady of considerable size, with a great idea of her own importance in the world.

"Boggs," she never tired of saying, "pray remember our position and what people expect of us," and it was entirely due to her ambitious endeavours and to sundry judicious subscriptions to party funds that Sir Jasper had been knighted at all. If the truth be told he would far preferred to have gone through life as plain "Mister," but needs must when the Devil drives.

Mrs. Crawley referred to Lady Boggs as "that odious woman," so it was no wonder that at the end of three days, during which she had seen very little of James and a very great deal of Lady Boggs, she was suffering from chronic boredom. Less than forty-eight hours later, therefore, in reply to a peremptory letter to her husband, she received a telegram announcing that Colonel Crawley was suffering from some mysterious complaint not specified, and that her immediate presence was desirable. It was a put-up job, but she gladly shook the dust of Porthcannon from her feet, while the graceless

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and delighted James, at the express invitation of Josephine, backed up in a weak moment by her father, transferred himself and his impedimenta to Cliff House.

Provided always that the weather is fine, and that one has the company of the one person in the world whom one loves better than oneself, a ramble along a firm sandy shore fringed with cliffs is no unpleasant way of spending a summer Sunday afternoon. It is pleasanter still if the beach is rarely visited by other people, and if the foreshore is cut into a series of deep gullies and small coves by great promontories of rock stretching seaward from the grey cliffs above. Coves and gullies are so private!

But if the cliffs are high and so precipitous that they cannot be scaled by anything less agile and prehensile than a lizard, and if the rise and fall of the tide is more or less an unknown quantity, it is always wise before setting out to make quite certain of the time of high-water. It was the neglect of this precaution which led to the absence from home of James and his lady-love, and the consequent wrath of Lady Boggs.

It happened at about four o'clock in the afternoon that the culprits, going home for tea, turned a corner and saw that the water had already risen above the rocks at the foot of the miniature cape ahead of them.

"Lord!" said James. "I am an unmitigated ass!"

"What's the matter?" asked Josephine anxiously.

"Merely that we're cut off from home. The tide's risen and we can't get round that corner!"

"Can't we wade?" she suggested.

"Daren't risk it," said James. "The water's at least eight feet deep."

"Can't we swim?"

"You might, old girl, but my left arm's still too groggy to try it."

"H'm. We can't climb the cliffs, I suppose?"

"Impossible," replied James, looking at them and shaking his head.

"Well, I suppose we'll have to stay here till the tide goes down. There's nothing else for it."

"I am a silly fool!" he reiterated. "I knew we couldn't pass after four o'clock!"

"It's nearly four now," said Josephine, looking at her watch.

"I know," he answered dolefully. I'd no idea it was so late."

"Stupid old thing!" she laughed. "But don't worry yourself. It's a warm afternoon, and we shall be quite happy here for an hour or two until the tide goes down."

James sighed dismally. "An hour or two! It's not high-water till nine o'clock, Greenwich time. We shan't be able to get past that beastly ledge till a long time after midnight!"

The girl looked at him with a serious expression. "That's bad. Eight hours, and we've nothing to eat. We'll be rather hungry by the time we do get home again. Good gracious, though!" she added with a little chuckle of amusement, "won't mother and father be excited?"

"Will they not?" James nodded dolefully, thinking of Lady Boggs. "I shall never hear the end of it."

Josephine laughed. "Well, what are we to do?"

"That's the question," he said, stroking his chin meditatively, and gazing at the cliffs for inspiration. "This beach is completely covered at high tide; you can see the high-water mark along the base of the cliffs where that seaweed is."

"We could sit on one of these lumpy rocks," she suggested, pointing. "Their tops aren't covered even at high tide, by the look of them."

"They'll be jolly hard and uncomfortable if we have to squat there for several hours. Besides, suppose the wind gets up and makes a lop? It'll be beastly wet, and we might get washed off. Better look for a cave," he added hopefully; "the cliffs here are all honeycombed by the sea."

"Well?"

"It might be a decent sort of cave," he continued, "and the inner end of it might perhaps be dry at high tide. Better than being gummed to a bloomin' hard rock like a pair of perishin' limpets. Come on, let's go and look."

They went off together along the beach at a good pace.

"This," said James twenty minutes later, "seems the very place for us."

Josephine, hard on his heels, agreed with enthusiasm.

They had found their cave. It was a natural grotto in the cliffs about six feet wide at the entrance, and for the first few yards of its length was tolerably illuminated by the light coming in through the opening. The floor of firm, water-smoothed sand, sloped sharply upwards, so that after advancing six feet from the entrance they passed a line of damp, pungent seaweed left by the receding tide and found themselves treading on dry, powdery sand. The roof of the cavern seemed to form a natural arch about eight feet overhead, and small trickles of water on the rocky grey sides showed where moisture percolated through the soil above.

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There came a feeble glimmer, and then a sheet of orange flame . . . . as the rag caught fire. They both looked round about, to find themselves in a natural sandy-floored cavern.
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"The sand's as dry as a bone," James observed in a very relieved voice, bending down to feel it. "The tide won't reach us here."

"Thank goodness for that," said his companion. "Lead on, MacDuff. This cave is getting quite exciting."

They went on another few feet with the light getting dimmer and dimmer behind them, and then, turning a slight bend, found themselves treading on loose sand in total darkness.

"There's been a sort of landslide here," said James. "I can feel an opening beyond."

He advanced warily with the fingers of one outstretched hand trailing along the rocky wall and Josephine clutching him by the coat-tail. All went well for about half-a-dozen paces, but then quite suddenly he caught his shin against something sharp, and fell forward with a smothered exclamation.

"What's the matter, Jim? Where are you?" Josephine asked, rather alarmed at feeling his coat suddenly wrenched from her fingers. "Are you all right?"

He sat up, rolled over, and spat some sand out of his mouth. "Ugh!" he exclaimed, ejecting it noisily. "My mouth's bunged up, and I've barked my shin. It feels like a——" She could hear his fingers drumming against something hollow. "Yes, by George! It's an empty tin."

"Strike a match and let's have a look at it," she suggested. "I want to see what you look like. Is your hair full of sand?"

"Is it not!" he said glumly, fumbling in his pocket for the matchbox. "Lord! old girl. We shall have to go easy with the lucifers. There aren't more than eight or nine of 'em left. Here goes for the first."

The tiny, flickering flame sprang up, and, with Josephine bending towards him, they examined the object on the ground.

"Why," she said, "it's only one of those petrol tins. It looks brand new, doesn't it?"

"Yes," he agreed, examining it closely. "But how the deuce did it come here?"

"Washed in by the tide," she suggested.

"Don't you believe it," said James. "It couldn't. . . . Hang! There goes the match. It couldn't have been washed here. Who ever heard of an empty tin being washed up a slope and deposited in a cave about twenty feet above high-water mark?"

"How did it come here then?" she asked. "Light another match and let's look at it again."

"No, not yet," he said. "I've got an idea."

She heard him fumbling with the tin, and then after a few moments of frenzied breathing, a shrill, protesting squeak as he unscrewed the brass cap. "It isn't quite empty," he observed at last. "Smell that."

She felt for his hand in the darkness, found it, and conveyed it to her nose. "Paraffin," she declared immediately.

James grunted happily. "I thought so," he said, seeming rather pleased with himself. "Now I'm going to soak a bit of my handkerchief in the stuff and light it. Keep your weather eye lifting when it flares up."

She heard him scratching away at a matchbox; there came a feeble glimmer, and then a sheet of orange flame and a cloud of pungent black smoke as the rag caught fire.

They both looked round about, to find themselves in a natural sandy-floored cavern about a dozen feet across and the same height. It was the shape of an irregular circle, and on the far side, stacked against the rocky wall, a large, carefully stowed pile of square, green-painted tins reached nearly to the roof.

James whistled softly between his teeth, and strode across to tap the lower layer with his knuckles. The tins were full. He proceeded to test each tier in turn. They were all full, and, making a hasty calculation, he guessed that there must be between a hundred and a hundred and fifty of them.

The flame flickered and went out.

"George!" he muttered, hardly able to believe his eyes. "Did you see, Jo?"

"Yes," she answered. "What on earth does it mean?"

"Paraffin; two or three hundred gallons of it. Can't you guess what we've stumbled across?"

"Haven't an idea," she said.

He bent down and whispered something in her ear.

"Surely you don't mean that this——"

"I do, my dear," he chuckled. "We've fallen across one of their fuel depots. How the stuff's got here I can't imagine, but nobody else in his sane senses would leave paraffin in a cave, would they?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Well, our obvious plan is to do the dirty on 'em when next she arrives to fill up. They probably ferry the stuff off in a boat."

"Yes. But how do you propose to do it?"

"That wants some thinking out," he was forced to admit.

"Supposing they come to-night?"

"I don't think they will come to-night," James answered. "It would suit them to arrive at high-water, and that's at nine o'clock. If I was running their show I wouldn't fetch up till one or two in the mornin'."

["THE HOLE IN THE CLIFFS" continued overleaf.]

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"But supposing they do come?" Josephine persisted.

James shrugged his shoulders in the darkness and grinned. "If they do," he said, "I shall have to lay out the first blighter who comes into the cave, and while I sit on his chest you must lash him up. We shall have to take our chance with the others. Have you a belt or anything?"

"No-o," she said, rather alarmed at the prospect.

"Then I'll tear up my shirt."

"Wouldn't my petticoat be better?" she suggested after a moment's thought.

"You'll catch your death of cold, old lady."

"No, I shan't. We could tear it in strips, and plait them into a sort of rope."

After some further argument he eventually gave way, and Josephine's *glacé* silk petticoat was sacrificed for her country's sake. But it was sacrificed in vain, for though they made their rope and waited patiently till midnight, nothing happened.

But perhaps it was just as well, for even the bellicose James did not relish the idea of tackling several armed and bloodthirsty Huns with a groggy arm and no better weapons than his bare fists.

III.

At one o'clock in the morning, cold, tired, and hungry, they eventually arrived at Cliff House to find Lady Boggs in a state of partial collapse, and her husband, with a posse of police and special constables, scouring the countryside in search of them. Their arrival was hailed with great relief; but the next morning James spent a most uncomfortable quarter-of-an-hour with his prospective mother-in-law.

"Your behaviour, Mr. Crawley," she observed in her most frigid manner, "has been positively disgraceful. Never in my life have I——"

"My dear Amelia," Sir Jasper interrupted, anxious to smooth things over, "do be reasonable. Josephine has explained everything, and I am quite satisfied."

"Be quiet, Boggs! Nothing that you can say will alter my opinion. I am well aware of our daughter's explanation, but the whole blame lies with Mr. Crawley. He had no right whatever to get cut off by the tide. If you ask me, I believe he did it on purpose!"

Sir Jasper opened his mouth to reply, but James forestalled him. "Lady Boggs," he said quietly, "I'm afraid I cannot convince you, and I am quite aware I did a stupid thing; but I am much too fond of Josephine to keep her in a cave for eight hours without tea or dinner. However, as you think I have done wrong I will leave your house this morning and go to the hotel. Unfortunately I cannot leave Porthcannon just yet, but I shall go as soon as I possibly can."

"Tut, tut! I won't hear of it, my dear boy!" puffed Sir Jasper. "I won't hear of it! Stay as long as you like!"

"Mind your own business, Jasper!" snorted his wife, rapidly losing her temper.

Sir Jasper became purple about the face, and James, bowing politely to his hostess, retired gracefully and closed the door behind him. A domestic difference of opinion was the last thing he wished to be involved in.

But half-an-hour later, as he was busy packing his belongings, James heard a discreet tap on his bedroom door.

"Come in!"

"It's me, my boy," said his host, entering the room with rather a hang-dog expression. "I've brought you a note from my wife."

"Thanks very much, Sir Jasper. I'm just packing up. You don't know how sorry I am that all this trouble——"

"Tut, tut, young man!" exclaimed the knight, still breathless and flushed with his wordy encounter. "Don't let that worry you. Read the note."

"But you didn't tell her what I told you, surely?" demanded James, opening the envelope.

"Of course not, my boy. Of course not. Haven't said a word. But peruse the letter."

James did so.

"DEAR MR. CRAWLEY (it said), I hope you will stay with us as long as convenient.

Yours very sincerely,
AMELIA BOGGS."

"Yours *very* sincerely!" read James aloud. "Sir Jasper, what does this mean? Can I possibly stay after what has happened?"

"You'd better, my boy. You see, I've persuaded Lady B. that you're going to—er—well, that I quite approve of you and Josephine — er"—he cleared his throat noisily—"well, you know what I mean."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" ejaculated the prospective bridegroom, while his host, breathing heavily, mopped his face with a florid bandana handkerchief.

It was late the same afternoon that James came upon Josephine playing a solitary game of clock-golf on the lawn. "Jo, can you talk German?" he demanded.

"Yes, after a fashion; but first I want to know why you ran away immediately after lunch and left me alone the whole afternoon?"

"I'm awfully sorry, dear, but I haven't

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had a moment to spare," he apologised hastily. "I've been interviewing the Coast-guard officer and telegraphing all over the country the whole blessed time. At first they all seemed to imagine that I was wrong in the head, but I've convinced 'em at last, and things have begun to hum. But you can talk the Hun language, what?"

"Yes."

"Thank the Lord for that. There isn't another soul in the place who can, apparently. Here you are," he added, fumbling in his pocket and handing her a scrap of paper. "I've written down a few things there. Can you manage 'em?"

"Two Thermos flasks with coffee—no sugar in mine. Three dozen sandwiches. Electric torch. Two boxes matches. Pencil. Paper. Wrap up warm. Be at boat harbour by 8.30 to-night punctually," she read. "But what's it all about, Jim? Why all this food?"

"D'you mind running a certain amount of risk?" he asked, evading her question.

"No."

"Well, I want you to come down to the cave to-night. As you know the language you may be jolly useful."

"Do you think they'll arrive to-night, then?" she asked mysteriously.

"Hush! Not so loud! You don't know who may hear you," he whispered anxiously. "It's quite possible that they will come to-night, and we cannot afford to lose a chance. But I must rush off and make more arrangements. Promise me you'll be there?"

"I promise," she smiled.

"Righto! I must trot along. So long." He turned on his heel.

"Jim!"

"Hullo?"

"Haven't you forgotten something?"

He swung round and looked at her.

"Forgotten something? What?"

"Merely that we're properly engaged now and that nobody's looking."

He drew her to him.

"You brazen little hussy!" he said. "I'm so sorry."

IV.

Three days later Ober-Leutnant Rudolf von Harlingen, the commanding officer of His Imperial Majesty's submarine "U 93," was in a very amiable frame of mind.

"Hermann," he observed to his second-in-command, "this cruise has been the most profitable since the war started. Fourteen English merchant ships have we sunk, five neutrals, and that armed patrol vessel this morning. Our superiors will be pleased with us."

"So they ought to be," grunted the officer addressed as Hermann, eyeing the black and white striped ribbon of the Iron Cross in his buttonhole. "We shall receive more decorations from the All Highest. The Order of Merit, perhaps?"

His senior smiled deprecatingly. "Yes, it seems likely. To-night we shall take in some more of that fuel which was so kindly deposited for us by the *Cormoran*, our so-called 'neutral' friend, and in a week we shall be back at Wilhemshafen. Think of it!"

"I do think of it, night and day!" said Hermann, smacking his lips. "After three weeks in a sardine tin it will be heaven. What are the orders for to-night?"

"We shall lie on the bottom till dark and then rise. I shall arrange to be off the place about one hour before high-water. We shall lie there recharging our batteries on the surface until just before daylight, while you go in in the boat as usual. Ha, ha! These stupid English will never think to look for a submarine so near to their sacred coast!"

Shortly before eleven o'clock "U 93," proceeding on the surface using her electric motors, was groping her way noiselessly towards the coast. The sky was overcast, with no moon. A slight breeze ruffled the calm surface of the sea into tiny ripples, and the night was so dark that even at two hundred yards the long, black hull of the submarine would only have been visible as an indistinct, moving blur on the water. Ahead of her lay the intensely dark shadow of the cliffs she was rapidly approaching; astern, the open sea.

Von Harlingen, on the conning-tower, was busy with his glasses.

"H'm!" he grunted, putting them down and glancing at the dimly-lit compass-card. "Our reckoning is correct. There is the hummock we must steer for."

Ten minutes later, when the cliffs seemed barely more than a quarter-of-a-mile ahead, the purring of the motors stopped and a small Berthon boat was opened out and placed in the water. Hermann and two men scrambled into her, and, pushing off, pulled away noiselessly, to disappear in the gloom before they had travelled fifty yards.

Ten minutes passed—a quarter-of-an-hour.

Von Harlingen, sitting on the conning-tower, gazed shorewards, while his men, clustered on the low superstructure talking in subdued whispers, were gratefully gulping down the pure night air. It was a blessed change after the fœtid atmosphere inside the boat.

Eighteen minutes!

("THE HOLE IN THE CLIFFS" continued overleaf.)

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Suddenly there came a shout from the shore.

"*Gott in himmel!*" muttered von Harlingen angrily, jumping to his feet. "What are the fools thinking about to shout? *Ach Gott*, what is that?"

He may well have been alarmed, for the crack of a single revolver-shot echoed out through the night air. It was followed instantaneously by several more. Then further shouting.

Von Harlingen darted to the conning-tower and roared an order to someone below, while the startled men taking the air scrambled up after him. But he had hardly spoken when three trails of fire leapt into the sky from the shore, and in a moment the surrounding sea and the cliffs were flooded in a blue-white radiance.

The answer came at once. A sheet of flame burst out of the darkness from somewhere quite near at hand, and a shell screeched savagely and burst in the water a few feet short of the conspicuous conning-tower, to deluge the huddled, struggling mass of men with splinters. Several of them, torn and mangled, dropped off into the water.

Then there came a wild roaring in their ears. They looked round terror-stricken, to see within two hundred yards of them a rapidly advancing, black, V-shaped shadow and two enormous plumes of white spray.

Some cast themselves overboard, some shrieked and remained paralysed with fear; then came a sickening impact and the awful rending crash of riven steel.

* * * * *

"Ye gods!" muttered James, standing at the mouth of the cave with a pistol in his hand. "She's walked clean through her!"

"Yes," agreed the Coastguard officer, trembling in his excitement. "A destroyer at full speed takes some stopping. Hullo, young lady!" he added, darting forward. "Hold up!" for Josephine, standing beside them, was swaying ominously.

No wonder, for even the cold-blooded James felt a little sick.

(Another entertaining naval story appears next month.)

THE BROKEN CONCERTINA.

My fine steel reeds are rusted,
My bellowses are busted,
I've a crack across the middle of my board.
All my white bone keys are gone,
And my singin' days are done,
So I'm thrown out here upon the sandy road.

II.

I have played up in the North,
As the stars came peeping forth,
I have played down in the South, Sebakwe way;
By the great Victoria Falls,
Where the jackal nightly calls,
And I squeaked a hymn when Scotty passed away.

III.

I've been cursed both long and deep
When the others wanted sleep,
And some Johnny would keep grinding out a song;
In the middle of the night,
I have caused two mates to fight,
Just because one said the other played too long.

IV.

Yes! and with my gentle squeaks
I have wet old fellows' cheeks,
As their thoughts I've carried back to bygone days,
I have made them pipe their eyes,
Heard them heave up heavy sighs,
As they pictured home within the firelight blaze.

V.

But I've met with sad disgrace—
Let me hide my damaged face—
I got broke and crushed beneath a wagon wheel;
I am left out here to die,
To be scorned by passers by,
Who never gave a thought to what I fe[el]

W. Beaw[ish]

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THE MISSING SOUS.

By Oliver Madox-Hueffer.

"Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt."

Toinette was six. She was very fond of soldiers, though I think it must have been an acquired taste. She used to live at Les Hardouin, which is a village two or three miles out of Lille. When the war came and with it the Boches, she left Les Hardouin and came to live at Monaster-on-the-Lys, which is near Armentières. It is only about a dozen miles from Les Hardouin, but there is a third place called No Man's Land in between, which is more difficult to cross than the Atlantic Ocean just now.

In Monaster, Toinette lived with her aunt, whose name was Gabrielle and who was very well off. Her husband, whose name was Big Pierre to his intimates and Monsieur Lenouf to those who did business with him, was a farmer before the war. After the war came he still farmed, but he made more money out of selling things to the "Anglishes." The "Anglishes" are very good soldiers, but they are simple souls, who are always ready to pay three or even six times more than a thing is worth. They are not at all clear about the change, either.

So M. Lenouf laid in a stock of writing-pads and picture postcards and tinned pine-apples and chocolate and cigarettes. Also he laid in very many barrels of what he called English ale and stout, but what the people who drank it called "swipes" until they got used to the flavour. If he did not bless the day that the war started and pray daily that it might last for very many years, it must have been either that he was irreligious or no business man. As a matter of fact, he was not very religious, but that was a matter of pre-war politics.

The house of M. Lenouf was in the main street of Monaster. For some mad reason of their own the English, after they came to be billeted in the village, called the street Topnimcoureau—written, curiously enough, Tottenham Court Road, but so pronounced on the word of Monsieur *le Curé*. As they paid the piper, no sensible person could object to their calling it anything they liked, and if you had asked little Toinette she would have given it as her address. She did not really live on the street at all because, like his neighbours, M. Lenouf lived in a farmhouse, and, as everyone knows, a farmhouse is like an old fortress, built round a square, with a splendid sea of manure in the middle of the courtyard, with the barns backing on to the street and the dwelling-house facing them across the manure.

War entails sacrifices upon everybody, and accordingly, as soon as the "Anglishes" arrived, M. Lenouf sacrificed his two principal living-rooms. That on the right he devoted to the private soldiers, for there were the barrels of "swipes," with a long table and a couple of benches for greater ease in drinking. On the other side of the entrance passage was a similar room. It was crowded with heavy old furniture, bought at a low price from families that had fled from beyond where was now No Man's Land at the first coming of the Boches.

They had mostly rescued what furniture they could in their farm waggons, and as they passed through Monaster they had been ready enough to sell it, even at such prices as M. Lenouf was ready to give. His neighbours thought him mad, but he had always maintained that the Boches would never reach Monaster, and as events proved he was right. In the room were several comfortable chairs, and in them young officers were wont to sit and drink *Vin Mousseux* at three francs the bottle. There was a back entrance to the house which opened on to the fields, and M. Lenouf, who thought of everything, reserved that for the officers.

Little Toinette spent most of her time with *messieurs les officiers*. She early observed that if she brought them the corkscrew herself they nearly always gave her a sou, or

["THE MISSING SOUS" continued overleaf.]

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perhaps two, in return, which saved her the trouble of begging for them in the streets, like the other children of the village. She kept the corkscrew in a little hiding-place behind one of the big cupboards in the corner by the door, and there also she kept the accumulation of her sous. Toinette was a pretty child, with flaxen hair and a rosebud mouth, but she was not the less provident, after the local fashion.

Of all the soldiers upon whom Toinette bestowed her smiles the most grateful was certainly M. Le Gros. Toinette did not know his real name, but she called him Le Gros because he was large and rather fat, and he answered to the name readily enough. His battalion was billeted in Monaster for several weeks, and he saw a good deal of Toinette. She was always glad to see him because she found that not only did he usually give her four sous when she brought the corkscrew, and once a whole glorious franc—a very dirty paper one, but not the less acceptable—but several times he brought her chocolate, and once she actually saw tears in his eyes when he kissed her. As a matter of fact, he was a lieutenant in the Rutlandshires, and he had a little daughter of the same age as Toinette, and the little daughter was very ill and would probably die, but that Toinette did not know.

The Quartermaster, who was billeted on M. Lenouf and spent a good deal of his time in the officers' room, could not understand Le Gros—whose name, by the way, was really Barton. Toinette was a pretty kid enough, but her conversation lacked distinction, and she was not at all clean. To kiss her and take her on your knee and talk nonsense to her by the half-hour together seemed to him unworthy of an officer in the smartest battalion in the New Armies. Of course, the Quartermaster was not a family man.

Toinette's aunt also thought M. Le Gros was mad, but she welcomed anything that brought custom to the house. Childless herself, she gave shelter to the fatherless daughter of her dead sister because there was nowhere else for the child to go. When she grew up she might be a useful drudge; until then anything which *le bon Dieu* might send as a reward was to the good. Once when M. Le Gros was absent for three days she even washed the child, as a sacrifice to the fates.

As for M. Lenouf, he merely smiled tolerantly. Not for anything in the world would M. Lenouf have done anything to annoy one of *messieurs les officiers*. For that matter, he was careful not to annoy anybody. For the ten years since he had settled in Monaster and married Gabrielle he had never been known to quarrel, and in that quarrelsome village he was accordingly regarded with some awe, and also with general approval, for he was a quiet man who always kept on good terms with the authorities and was well known to be one of the warmest men in the district.

He came from the Normandy coast, it was supposed, though he spoke little of his earlier life; was formerly a commercial traveller in agricultural machinery, and after his marriage settled among his wife's people. Monaster thought very well of him. It is true that certain of his activities were unknown to Monaster, especially since the war began. Sometimes at night, for instance, he would hold secret conference with men who crept up to the farm across the fields and scratched very lightly on a window-pane. Sometimes they were ragged peasants, and sometimes tramps, and sometimes prosperous-looking farmers, and once or twice women, but they always came with the same secrecy and crept away across the fields before dawn. And M. Lenouf never mentioned their visits to anybody, not even to his wife.

The first day of September, 1916, was a most important date in the life of Toinette, for that morning, counting her secret store, she found that it at last amounted to a whole hundred sous, ten handsome little brown columns of ten apiece. That afternoon, counting them over again at a time when the room happened to be empty, she was brought to the extremity of despair—two were missing. There was no doubt about it, for she counted them over a dozen times—from the end column two coins had disappeared.

The tragedy of it was that there was no one to whom she could confide her loss. Her aunt would in all probability confiscate the rest if she knew. Big Pierre would do the same and laugh at her into the bargain. Fat Jeanne, who served the beer to the soldiers and did the housework and looked after the hens and the manure-heap—as likely as not Fat Jeanne had taken them herself. Toinette was very miserable indeed. It was the first tragedy in her life, for the death of her parents had happened when she was too young to realise her loss, and since then life had had for her few joys—save in the accumulation of her sous—and as few real sorrows.

Actually, the two lost coins had slipped from the top of the column when some passing motor-lorry shook the house, and were between the wardrobe and the wainscot; Toinette in her dismay overlooked them. And, as a consequence, for the first time

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in her memory she could not sleep that night.

Toinette shared her bedroom with Fat Jeanne. Formerly they slept in the house, but since the coming of the "Anglishes" the room had been needed to billet four officers, and the barns were given up to the men, so Jeanne and Toinette had to make shift in a little outhouse hung on to the back of the farm and looking into the orchard. It was draughty and not over-pleasant otherwise, especially as all the straw had been sold to the officers in order to make their men more comfortable; but one can always manage when there is money to be made.

Fat Jeanne slept as usual that night on her back, soundly and snoring very loudly. Toinette lay awake, crying over her lost sous and watching the moonlight creep slowly across the mud floor. There was no window to the outhouse, but the door was half-open, and from where she lay Toinette could see the back wall of the farmhouse with its three windows and the little back entrance that was used by *messieurs les officiers*.

The night was full of noises—the crashing of heavy lorries careering down the street, the soughing of the wind in the apple-trees, and the unceasing roar of the distant guns that had not ceased once in all the months since Toinette came to Monaster. The moon was high, and huge white clouds drifting across it kept the world in a continual uncertainty of light and shade. It was after a long, grey eclipse that the returning light threw into high relief the dark figure of a man standing close to one of the windows. He was a tall man, dressed in a long black blouse, with a visored cap drawn over his eyes, and sabots. One of his arms was raised and he seemed to be trying to open the window, but very silently.

Toinette sat up instantly. In a flash it came to her that this was the man who had already taken her two sous. He must be coming back for the rest, and unless she could do something to stop him—— She was afraid, very much afraid, but—and suddenly she thought of M. Le Gros. He, she knew, as children know these things, would do anything for her; he was very big and strong; he, if anyone, would help her.

Lieutenant Barton was billeted at the Café of the Star, which was in the Grandmaison Road, rechristened by the "Anglishes" Ludgate Hill. It was not more than a hundred yards away, but there was the terrible main street to be crossed, a foot deep in mud, up and down which all night long roared long lines of motor-lorries and ambulances, and sometimes dark columns of marching men. No child in the village would have dared to cross it after nightfall, even the grown-ups were afraid—but M. Le Gros lived beyond it, and with him rested the salvation of the stolen sous.

Toinette crept to the open doorway, listened for a moment to Jeanne's heavy breathing, and crept noiselessly round the outhouse in the thick shadow. The man was still standing beside the window, but he had dropped his arm and seemed to be waiting.

Lieutenant Barton's bedroom, which he shared with one of his comrades, looked directly upon the street. He was reading Browning, being that sort of person, when there came a tapping at the window. He was not surprised, because it was the obvious way of calling him, but he rubbed his eyes when he saw the small face, the dirt on it showing clearly in the moonlight, and heard the eager voice whispering—for Toinette was at heart a cautious person—that he must come at once to capture the bad man who was stealing her hundred sous. Captain Hedges woke at his exclamation, and when Toinette had been lifted in through the window, they discussed what should be done, discussed it so slowly that Toinette spurned them in baby-patois for laggards and cowards.

In the end, deciding on burglars, they determined to go and see, and went, carrying Toinette, terrified but triumphant. The man had disappeared from the orchard when they peered cautiously round the corner of the outhouse, but the little back entrance was just ajar, and there was the faintest line of light under the shutters of the window on the right.

Much to her disgust Toinette was left with Captain Hedges, who had never given her any sous, while M. Le Gros crept forward very quietly, pressed open the door and entered. He still diagnosed burglars, because the light was where no light should have been, in a little room that was half-cellar, half-storehouse, and quite away from the living part of the house. He knew that, because you went through it when you were taking the back way into the officers' room.

The first words that he heard were spoken by M. Lenouf. They were spoken in a low voice, but they were distinct enough to him. They were "*Ja, Herr Hauptmann*," and they were spoken very respectfully.

It was unfortunate for M. Lenouf that M. Le Gros understood a little German; though the real misfortune was that Toinette should have lost her two sous. She did not rightly understand what happened beyond that, after some minutes, M. Le Gros crept back and whispered to Captain Hedges, and

("THE MISSING SOUS" continued overleaf.)

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that after cautioning her to be silent, they waited, one on either side of the little back door, until the man in the black blouse came out, and then leapt upon him like two tigers, and gagged him and carried him off like three struggling shadows. A lot of soldiers came a little time afterwards with fixed bayonets that glittered in the moonlight, and took M. Lenouf away in his night-clothes, protesting volubly, while the screams of Madame Lenouf made the whole village think that the Bosches were coming. Toinette never saw her Uncle Pierre again, but she got her two sous back, which was, after all, the chief thing.

As a matter of fact, she got a good deal more than two sous out of it. The "Anglishes" are an absurdly sentimental people, and they really had some cause to act as they did, for quite a lot of unpleasant things had been happening in that part of the world which nobody could explain until it came out that M. Lenouf was not really a Frenchman at all, but a Bosche who had been sent to Monaster by his government ten years before in case he should be wanted there, and since the war had repaid all the trouble and expense by proving himself the boldest and quite the most successful of his kind in that part of France, and had made his house the chief centre of all the Bosche espionage carried on thereabouts.

The "Anglishes" being, as I say, very sentimental, took it into their heads that little Toinette had acted out of pure patriotism, and as she had no father or mother the officers of the Rutlandshires adopted her, and subscribed money for her education and sent her away to a school in Paris, where in time she will learn everything that a well-brought-up young woman ought to learn. Though whether she is as happy there as she was in the days when she used to earn sous for bringing the corkscrews to *messieurs les officiers*, and slept in the outhouse with Fat Jeanne, is open to doubt.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

Maiden with the sunshine tresses,
  Playing where the streamlets wimple
'Neath the soft south wind's caresses—
  (Skin like roses, milk, and pearl!)
Though you look so sweet and simple—
  (Heartless and distracting girl!)
You've a most disturbing dimple,
  Little Lady Golden-Curl!

Shy and charming little lady!
  Like a Reynolds' nymph appearing
In a hat that's large and shady—
  (While the plaintive lover sighs.)
Timid first, and then, unfearing,
  Smiles chase clouds across the skies—
Ah! your ways are most endearing,
  Little Lady Laughing-Eyes!

Seven years a queen, and yet
  Tears and smiles already blending—
Quite a finished, small coquette
  To her chubby finger-tips!
Haughty first, and then, unbending,
  Roguishly, away she trips—
Ah! your wiles are never-ending,
  Little Lady Pouting-Lips!

Gwen Nisbet.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Concerning the Army and Navy.

CUPID KEEPS US BUSY.

THERE has not been an epidemic of weddings in the office; far from it—I am merely referring to the labours that devolve upon us through the Love-Letter Competition in which prizes were offered by Miss Mabel Funston for the best love-letters written to her by our fighting men. I do not know if there is something in the mud of Flanders and the salt tang of the ocean that conspires to sentiment, but I do know that soldiers and sailors alike have responded nobly to Miss Funston's invitation, and the rooms sacred to the ROYAL are snowed under.

I rejoice that it is so. Miss Funston has shown me some of the letters, and what strikes me most about them is the eagerness with which the men welcome such a diversion, and their huge appreciation of a pretty face. Half the dug-outs in France are apparently papered with pictures of Miss Funston, while she reigns unchallenged in gun-room and mess, and lurks unsuspected in many a pay-book and "ditty-box."

The work of choosing the prize-winners is an arduous one, for the standard of excellence—as they say in examination reports—is a high one, but the great offensive has begun, we are all hard at it, and I hope to announce the result in the April Number.

PLUMS FROM MY POSTBAG.

Although love-letters predominate in these days, my daily post brings many other contributions from the Army and Navy, for both the services appear to harbour lyrical and artistic talent. I think of the two the future Bairnsfathers are the more successful. The atmosphere of the Front hardly radiates that holy calm which poets assert is necessary for the production of the choicest verse. There is perhaps less mental concentration required in sketching, or at least it would seem so, judging by the amazingly good specimens that fall into my hands.

SUMMER and WINTER

The thumbnail sketches that decorate this page were sent in by a talented soldier serving his country in Salonica. After the war we shall probably be besieged by artists, who, let loose from the Army, will remind us that we once commented not adversely on their works of art. There may even be a *queue* outside the office, but we are willing to risk it, and—happy thought!—we have a back entrance!

BOTTOMLEY AT HIS BEST.

I commend to your notice the stirring article by Horatio Bottomley which appears on page 432. The question of conscription for women is a great one; Mr. Bottomley has dealt with it in a manner worthy of his best traditions. Next month Mr. Bottomley contributes another splendid article in which he discusses the question as to whether an heroic death wipes out past misdeeds, whether, in fact, it is enough to die gloriously when one has perhaps lived ingloriously. It is a wide question, and, at the present moment, a very vital one. Rest assured Mr. Bottomley does full justice to it.

DONOVAN OF WHITEHALL.

Mr. Le Queux's hero, whose adventures as King's Foreign Service Messenger recently appeared in the ROYAL under the title of "Donovan of Downing Street," makes his *début* on the bookstalls at the end of February. For breathless interest and sheer grip these stories are hard to beat. The book is published at a shilling, and is rattling good value for money.

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